SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS:

IN

FOUR VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed for G. WHITFIELD, New-Chapel, City-Road,
and sold at the Methodist-Preaching-Houses
in Town and Country.

1796.

1327

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SEVERAL OCCASIONS:

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THE

PREFACE.

1. THE following Sermons contain the ſubſtance of what I have been preaching, for between eight and nine years laſt paſt. During that time I have frequently ſpoken in public, on every ſubject in the enſuing Collection: and I am not conſcious, that there is any one point of doctrine on which I am accuſtomed to ſpeak in public, which is not here, incidentally, if not profeſſedly, laid before every Chriſtian Reader. Every ſerious man, who peruſes theſe, will therefore ſee in the cleareſt manner, what theſe doctrines are which I embrace and teach, as the Eſſentials of True Religion.

2. But I am thoroughly ſenſible, theſe are not propoſed, in ſuch a manner as ſome may expect. Nothing here appears in an elaborate, elegant or oratorial dreſs. If it had been my deſire or deſign to write thus, my leiſure would not permit. But in truth, I at preſent deſigned nothing leſs; for I now write (as I generally ſpeak) *ad populum*: to the bulk of mankind, to thoſe who neither reliſh nor underſtand the art of ſpeaking: but who notwithſtanding are competent judges of thoſe truths, which are neceſſary to preſent and future happineſs. I mention this, that curious Readers may ſpare themſelves the labour, of ſeeking, for what they will not find.

3. I deſign plain truth for plain people. Therefore of ſet purpoſe I abſtain from all nice and philoſophical ſpeculations, from all perplext and intricate reaſonings; and as far as poſſible, from even

the ſhew of learning, unleſs in ſometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not eaſy to be underſtood, all which are not uſed in common life: and in particular, thoſe kinds of technical terms, that ſo frequently occur in bodies of divinity, thoſe modes of ſpeaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to common people are an unknown tongue. Yet I am not aſſured, that I do not ſometimes ſlide into them unawares: it is ſo extremely natural to imagine, that a word which is familiar to ourſelves, is ſo to all the world.

4. Nay, my deſign is, in ſome ſenſe to forget all that ever I have read in my life. I mean to ſpeak, in the general, as if I had never read one Author, ancient or modern (always excepting the inſpired.) I am perſuaded, that on the one hand, this may be a means of enabling me more clearly to expreſs the ſentiments of my heart, while I ſimply follow the chain of my own thoughts, without entangling myſelf with thoſe of other men: and that, on the other, I ſhall come with fewer weights upon my mind, with leſs of prejudice and prepoſſeſſion, either to ſearch for myſelf, or to deliver to others, the naked truths of the Goſpel.

5. To candid, reaſonable men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmoſt thoughts of my heart. I have thought, "I am a creature of a day, paſſing through life, as an arrow through the air. I am a ſpirit come from God, and returning to God: juſt hovering over the great gulph: till a few moments hence, I am no more ſeen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land ſafe on that happy ſhore. God himſelf has condeſcended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *Homo unius libri.* Here then I am, far from the buſy ways of men. I ſit down alone:

alone: only God is here. In his preſence I open, I read his book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark and intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights. "Lord is it not thy word, *If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God?* Thou *giveſt liberally and upbraideſt not*, Thou haſt ſaid, *If any be willing to do thy will, he ſhall know.* I am willing to do. Let me know thy will." I then ſearch after and conſider parallel paſſages of ſcripture, *comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.* I meditate thereon, with all the attention and earneſtneſs of which my mind is capable. If any doubt ſtill remains, I conſult thoſe who are experienced in the things of God: and then, the writings whereby being dead, they yet ſpeak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.

6. I have accordingly ſet down in the following Sermons, what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven; with a view to diſtinguiſh this way of God, from all thoſe which are the inventions of men. I have endeavoured to deſcribe the true, the ſcriptural, experimental Religion, ſo as to omit nothing thereto which is not. And herein it is more eſpecially my deſire, firſt, to guard thoſe who are juſt ſetting their faces toward heaven, (and who having little acquaintance with the things of God, are the more liable to be turned out of the way) from formality, from mere outſide religion, which has almoſt driven heart religion out of the world: and ſecondly, to warn thoſe who know the religion of the heart, the faith which worketh by love, leſt at any time they make void the law through faith, and ſo fall back into the ſnares of the devil.

7. By the advice and at the requeſt of ſome of my friends, I have prefixt to the other ſermons contained in this Volume, three ſermons of my own and one of my Brother's, preached before the Univerſity of Oxford. My deſign required ſome diſcourſes on thoſe heads. And I preferred theſe be-

fore any others, as being a ſtronger anſwer than any which can be drawn up now, to thoſe who have frequently aſſerted, "That we have changed our doctrine of late, and do not preach now, what we did ſome years ago." Any man of underſtanding may now judge for himſelf, when he has compared the latter with the former Sermons.

8. But ſome may ſay, I have miſtaken the way myſelf, although I take upon me to teach it to others. It is probable, many will think this, and it is very poſſible, that I have. But I truſt, whereinſoever I have miſtaken, my mind is open to conviction. I ſincerely deſire to be better informed. I ſay to God and man, "What I know not, teach thou me!

9. Are you perſuaded, you ſee more clearly than me? It is not unlikely that you may. Then, treat me, as you would deſire to be treated yourſelf upon a change of circumſtances. Point me out a better way than I have yet known. Shew me it is ſo, by plain proof of ſcripture. And if I linger in the path I have been accuſtomed to tread, and therefore am unwilling to leave it, labour with me a little, take me by the hand, and lead me as I am able to bear. But be not diſpleaſed if I intreat you, not to beat me down, in order to quicken my pace: I can go but feebly and ſlowly at beſt; then, I ſhould not be able to go at all. May I not requeſt of you further, not to give me hard names, in order to bring me into the right way. Suppoſe I was ever ſo much in the wrong, I doubt this would not ſet me right. Rather, it would make me run ſo much the farther from you, and ſo get more and more out of the way.

10. Nay, perhaps, if you are angry, ſo ſhall I be too; and then there will be ſmall hopes of finding the truth. If once anger ariſe, πυκτε κάπνος (as Homer ſomewhere expreſſes it) this ſmoke will ſo dim the eyes of my ſoul, that I ſhall be able to ſee nothing clearly. For God's ſake, if it be poſſible to avoid it, let us not provoke one another to wrath.

Let

Let us not kindle in each other this fire of hell; much leſs blow it up into a flame. If we could diſcern truth by that dreadful light, would it not be loſs, rather than gain? For how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itſelf without love? We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's boſom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Juſt as much as it avails the devil and his angels!

The God of love forbid we ſhould ever make the trial! May he prepare us for the knowledge of all truth, by filling our hearts with all his love, and with all joy and peace in believing.

SALVATION

SALVATION BY FAITH: A SERMON

Preached at ST. MARY'S, OXFORD, before the UNIVERSITY, on June 18, 1738.

EPHESIANS II. 8.

"By Grace ye are saved through Faith."

1. ALL the bleſſings which God hath beſtowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour; his free, undeſerved favour! favour altogether undeſerved; man having no claim to the leaſt of his mercies. It was free grace that "formed man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into him a living ſoul," and ſtamped on that ſoul the image of God, and "put all things under his feet." The ſame free grace continues to us at this day, life and breath, and all things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deſerve the leaſt thing at God's hand, "All our works thou, O God haſt wrought in us." Theſe, therefore, are ſo many more inſtances of free mercy: and whatever righteouſneſs may be found in man, this is alſo the gift of God.

2. Wherewithal then ſhall a ſinful man atone for any the leaſt of his ſins? With his own works? No. Were they ever ſo many or holy, they are not his own, but God's. But indeed they are all unholy and ſinful themſelves, ſo that every one of them needs a freſh atonement. Only corrupt fruit grows on a corrupt tree. And his heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; being "come ſhort of the glory of God," the glorious righteouſneſs at firſt impreſſed on his ſoul, after the image of his great Creator. Therefore, having nothing, neither righteouſneſs nor works to plead, his "Mouth is utterly ſtopt before God."

3. If

3. If then ſinful man find favour with God, it is grace upon grace. If God vouchſafe ſtill to pour freſh bleſſings upon us, yea, the greateſt of all bleſſings, Salvation; what can we ſay to theſe things, but "Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable Gift!" And thus it is. Herein "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died to ſave us." By grace then are ye ſaved through faith. Grace is the ſource, faith the condition, of ſalvation.

Now, that we fall not ſhort of the grace of God, it concerns us carefully to enquire,

I. What Faith it is through which we are ſaved?

II. What is the Salvation which is through Faith?

III. How we may anſwer ſome Objections.

I. What Faith it is through which we are ſaved?

1. And firſt. It is not barely the faith of a heathen. Now God requireth of a heathen to believe, "That God is: that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him;" and that he is to be ſought by glorifying him as God, by giving him thanks for all things; and by a careful practice of moral virtue, of juſtice, mercy and truth toward their fellow creatures. A Greek or Roman therefore, yea a Scythian or Indian, was without excuſe if he did not believe thus much. The being and attributes of God, a future ſtate of reward and puniſhment, and the obligatory nature of moral virtue. For this is barely the faith of a heathen.

2. Nor, 2dly, Is it the faith of a devil, though this goes much farther than that of a heathen. For the devil believes, not only, that there is a wiſe and powerful God, gracious to reward, and juſt to puniſh, but alſo, that Jeſus is the Son of God, the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world. So we find him declaring, in expreſs terms, Luke iv. 34, "I know Thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." Nor can we doubt but that unhappy Spirit believes all

thoſe words, which came out of the mouth of the Holy One; yea, and whatſoever elſe was written by thoſe holy men of old; of two of them he was compelled to give that glorious teſtimony, "Theſe men are the Servants of the Moſt High God, who ſhew unto you the way of ſalvation." Thus much then the great Enemy of God and man believes and trembles in believing, that "God was made manifeſt in the fleſh;" that he will "tread all enemies under his feet," and that "all ſcripture was given by inſpiration of *God*." Thus far goeth the faith of a devil.

3. Thirdly, The faith through which we are ſaved, in that ſenſe of the word which will hereafter be explained, is not barely that which the Apoſtles themſelves had while Chriſt was yet upon earth; though they ſo believed on him as to "leave all and follow him; although they had then power to work miracles, to "heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſes;" yea, they had then "power and authority over all devils." And which is beyond all this, were ſent by their Maſter to "preach the kingdom of God."

4. What Faith is it then through which we are ſaved? It may be anſwered, firſt, in general, It is a faith in Chriſt; Chriſt, and God through Chriſt, are the proper object of it. Herein therefore, it is ſufficiently, abſolutely diſtinguiſhed from the faith either of ancient or modern heathens. And from the faith of a devil, it is fully diſtinguiſhed by this, it is not barely a ſpeculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeleſs aſſent, a train of ideas in the head; but alſo a diſpoſition of the heart. For thus ſaith the Scripture, "With the heart, man believeth unto righteouſneſs. And, If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhall believe with thy heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved."

5. And herein does it differ from that faith which the Apoſtles themſelves had while our Lord was on earth, that it acknowledges the neceſſity and merit of his death, and the power of his reſurrection.

It

It acknowledges his death as the only ſufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal; and his reſurrection as the reſtoration of us all to life and immortality: inaſmuch as "he was delivered for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification." Chriſtian faith is then, not only an aſſent to the whole goſpel of Chriſt, but alſo a full reliance on the blood of Chriſt, a truſt in the merits of his life, death, and reſurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life; *as given for us*, and *living in us*. It is a ſure confidence which a man hath in God that through the merits of Chriſt, *his* ſins are forgiven, and *he* reconciled to the favour of God; and in conſequence hereof, a cloſing with him, and cleaving to him, as our "Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption;" or in one word, our SALVATION.

II. What Salvation it is, which is through this Faith, is the ſecond thing to be conſidered.

1. And firſt, Whatſoever elſe it imply, it is a preſent ſalvation. It is ſomething attainable, yea, actually attained on earth, by thoſe who are partakers of this faith. For thus ſaith the Apoſtle to the believers at Epheſus, and in them to the believers of all ages, not ye ſhall be (though that alſo is true) but ye are ſaved through faith.

2. *Ye are ſaved* (to compriſe all in one word) from ſin. This is the ſalvation which is through faith. This is the great ſalvation foretold by the Angel, before God brought his firſt begotten into the world, "Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins." And neither here, nor in other parts of Holy Writ, is there any limitation or reſtriction. All his people, or, as it is elſewhere expreſſed, all that believe in him, he will ſave from their ſins; from original and actual, paſt and preſent ſin, of the fleſh and of the ſpirit. Through faith that is in him, they are ſaved both from the guilt and from the power of it.

3. Firſt from the guilt of all paſt ſin. For whereas all the world is guilty before God; inſomuch that

ſhould

ſhould he "be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, there is none that could abide it:" and whereas "by the Law is only the knowledge of ſin," but no deliverance from it; ſo that "by fulfilling the deeds of the Law, no fleſh can be juſtified in his ſight: now the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, is manifeſted unto all that believe." Now "they are juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt. Him God hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteouſneſs for (or by) the remiſſion of the ſins that are paſt. Now hath Chriſt taken away the curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us. He hath blotted out the hand-writing that was againſt us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs. There is therefore no condemnation now, to them which believe in Chriſt Jeſus.

4. And being ſaved from guilt, they are ſaved from fear. Not indeed from a filial fear of offending; but from all ſervile fear, from that fear which hath torment, from fear of puniſhment, from fear of the wrath of God; whom they no longer regard as a ſevere Maſter, but as an indulgent Father. "They have not received again the Spirit of bondage; but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itſelf alſo bearing witneſs with their ſpirits, that they are the children of God." They are alſo ſaved from the fear, though not from the poſſibility, of falling away from the grace of God, and coming ſhort of the great and precious promiſes: they are "ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the Earneſt of their inheritance." (Eph. i. 13.) Thus have they "Peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And the love of God is ſhed abroad in their hearts, through the Holy Ghoſt, which is given unto them." And hereby they are *perſuaded* (though perhaps not at all times, nor with the ſame fullneſs of perſuaſion) that

"neither

"neither death nor life, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor heighth nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord."

5. Again, through this faith they are ſaved from the power of ſin, as well as from the guilt of it. So the Apoſtle declares, "Ye know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins, and in him is no ſin. Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not." (John. iii. 5, &c.) Again, "Little children, let no man deceive you---He that committeth ſin is of the devil.—Whoſoever believeth is born of God. And whoſoever is born of *God* doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God." Once more, "We know that whoſoever is born of *God* ſinneth not: but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Chap. v. 18.

6. He that is by faith born of God, ſinneth not, 1. By any habitual ſin: for all habitual ſin, is ſin reigning. But ſin cannot reign in any that believeth. Nor 2, By any wilful ſin, for his will, while he abideth in the faith is utterly ſet againſt all ſin, and abhorreth it as deadly poiſon. Nor 3. By any ſinful deſire; for he continually deſireth the holy and perfect will of God; and any tendency to an unholy deſire, he by the grace of God, ſtifleth in the birth. Nor, 4. Doth he ſin by infirmities, whether in act, word or thought. For his infirmities, have no concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly ſins. Thus, "He that is born of God doth not commit ſin." And though he cannot ſay, He hath not ſinned, yet now, "he ſinneth not."

7. This then is the Salvation which is through Faith, even in the preſent world: a ſalvation from ſin, and the conſequences of ſin, both often expreſſed in the word *Juſtification*; which, taken in

the largeſt ſenſe, implies, a deliverance from guilt and puniſhment, by the Atonement of Chriſt actually applied to the ſoul of the ſinner now believing on him, and a deliverance from the whole body of ſin through Chriſt *formed in his heart*. So that he who is thus juſtified or ſaved by faith, is indeed *born again*. He is *born again of the Spirit* unto a new life, "which is hid with Chriſt in God." "He is a new creature: old things are paſt away: all things in him are become new. And as a new born babe he gladly receives the ἀδόλον, ſincere milk of the word, grows thereby: going on in the might of the Lord his God, from faith to faith, from grace to grace, until at length he comes unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt."

III. The firſt uſual Objection to this is,

1. That to preach Salvation, or Juſtification by faith only, is to preach againſt Holineſs and good Works. To which a ſhort anſwer might be given: It would be ſo, if we ſpake as ſome do, of a faith which was ſeparate from theſe. But we ſpeak of a faith which is not ſo, but neceſſarily productive of all good works and all holineſs.

2. But it may be of uſe to conſider it more at large: eſpecially ſince it is no new objection, but as old as St. Paul's time; for even then it was aſked, "Do we not make void the Law through Faith?" We anſwer, firſt, All who preach not Faith, do manifeſtly make void the Law; either directly and groſsly by limitations and comments, that eat out all the ſpirit of the Text: Or indirectly, by not pointing out the only means whereby it is poſſible to perform it. Whereas, ſecondly, *We eſtabliſh the law*; both by ſhewing its full extent, and ſpiritual meaning: and by calling all to that living way, whereby "the righteouſneſs of the law may be fulfilled in them." Theſe, while they truſt in the blood of Chriſt alone, uſe all the ordinances which he hath appointed, do all the "good works

works which he had before prepared that they ſhould walk therein," and enjoy and manifeſt all holy and heavenly tempers, even the ſame *mind that was in Chriſt Jeſus.*

3. But does not preaching this faith lead men into pride? We anſwer, Accidentally it may. Therefore ought every believer to be earneſtly cautioned, (in the words of the great Apoſtle) "Becauſe of unbelief, the firſt branches were broken off: and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. If God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he ſpare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodneſs and ſeverity of God! On them which fell, ſeverity; but towards thee, goodneſs: if thou continue in his goodneſs; otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off." And while he continues therein, he will remember thoſe words of St. Paul, foreſeeing and anſwering this very objection, (Rom. iii. 27.) "Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what Law? Of Works? Nay; but by the Law of Faith." If a man were juſtified by his works, he would have whereof to glory." But there is no glorying for him, "that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly," (Rom. iv.) To the ſame effect are the words both preceding and following the text, (Eph. ii. 4, &c.) "God who is rich in mercy—even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt (by grace ye are ſaved)—that he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus. For by grace ye are ſaved through faith. And that not of yourſelves." Of yourſelves cometh neither your faith nor your ſalvation. "It is the gift of God;" the free, undeſerved gift, the faith through which ye are ſaved, as well as the ſalvation, which he of his own good pleaſure, his mere favour, annexes thereto. That ye believe, is one inſtance of his grace; that believing ye are ſaved, another. "Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt." For all our works, all

our righteouſneſs, which were before our believing, merited nothing of God but condemnation. So far were they from deſerving faith; which therefore, whenever given, is not *of works*. Neither is ſalvation of the works we do when we believe. For *it is* then *God that worketh in us*. And therefore, that he giveth us a reward for what he himſelf worketh, only commendeth the riches of his mercy, but leaveth us nothing whereof to glory.

4. However, may not the ſpeaking thus of the mercy of God, as ſaving or juſtifying freely by faith only, encourage men in ſin? Indeed it may and will: many *will continue in ſin that grace may abound*. But their blood is upon their own head. The goodneſs of God ought to lead them to repentance; and ſo it will thoſe who are ſincere of heart. When they know there is yet forgiveneſs with him, they will cry aloud that he would blot out their ſins alſo, through faith which is in Jeſus. And if they earneſtly cry, and faint not, if they ſeek him in all the means he hath appointed, if they refuſe to be comforted till he come, *he will come and will not tarry*. And he can do much work in a ſhort time. Many are the examples in the Acts of the Apoſtles, of God's ſhedding abroad this faith in men's hearts, even like lightning falling from heaven. So in the ſame hour that Paul and Silas began to preach, the jailor *repented, believed, and was baptized:* as were three thouſand by St. Peter on the day of Pentecoſt, who all repented and believed at his firſt preaching. And bleſſed be God, there are now many living proofs, that he is ſtill *mighty to ſave*.

5. Yet to the ſame truth, placed in another view, a quite contrary objection is made; "If a man cannot be ſaved by all that he can do, this will drive men to deſpair." True, to deſpair of being ſaved by their own works, their own merits or righteouſneſs. And ſo it ought; for none can truſt in the merits of Chriſt, till he has utterly renounced his own. He that *goeth about to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs*,

righteouſneſs, cannot receive the righteouſneſs of God. The righteouſneſs which is of faith cannot be given him, while he truſted in that which is of the law.

6. But this, it is ſaid, is an uncomfortable doctrine. The devil ſpoke like himſelf, that is, without either truth or ſhame, when he dared to ſuggeſt to men that it is ſuch. It is the only comfortable one, it is *very full of comfort*, to all ſelf-deſtroyed, ſelf-condemned ſinners. That "whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed: That the ſame Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him:" here is comfort, high as Heaven, ſtronger than Death! What! Mercy for all? For Zaccheus, a public robber? For Mary Magdalene, a common harlot? Methinks I hear one ſay, Then I, even I, may hope for mercy! And ſo thou mayeſt, thou afflicted one, whom none hath comforted! God will not caſt out thy prayer. Nay, perhaps he may ſay the next hour, "Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee;" ſo forgiven that they ſhall reign over thee no more; yea, and that "the holy Spirit ſhall bear witneſs with thy ſpirit that thou art a child of God." O glad tidings! Tidings of great joy, which are ſent unto all people. "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; come ye and buy, without money, and without price." Whatſoever your ſins be, "though red, like crimſon, though more than the hairs of your head: return ye unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

7. When no more objections occur, then we are ſimply told, That ſalvation by faith only, ought not to be preached as the firſt doctrine, or at leaſt not to be preached to all. But what ſaith the Holy Ghoſt? *Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even* Jeſus Chriſt. So then, That *whoſoever believeth on him ſhall be ſaved*, is and muſt be the foundation of all our

preaching; that is, muſt be preached firſt. "Well, but not to all." To whom then are we not to preach it? Whom ſhall we except? The poor? Nay, they have a peculiar right to have the goſpel preached unto them. The unlearned? No. God hath revealed theſe things unto unlearned and ignorant men from the beginning. The young? By no means. *Suffer theſe* in any wiſe, *to come unto* Chriſt, *and forbid them not.* The ſinners? Leaſt of all. "He came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance." Why then, if any, we are to except the rich, the learned, the reputable, the moral men. And it is true, they too often except themſelves from hearing; yet we muſt ſpeak the words of our Lord. For thus the tenor of our commiſſion runs, "Go and preach the goſpel to every creature." If any man wreſt it, or any part of it to his deſtruction, he muſt bear his own burden. But ſtill, "as the Lord liveth, whatſoever the Lord ſaith unto us, that we will ſpeak."

8. At this time more eſpecially will we ſpeak, That *by grace ye are ſaved through faith:* becauſe never was the maintaining this doctrine more ſeaſonable than it is at this day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the increaſe of the *Romiſh* deluſion among us. It is endleſs to attack one by one, all the errors of that Church. But ſalvation by faith ſtrikes at the root, and all fall at once where this is eſtabliſhed. It was this doctrine (which our Church juſtly calls *the ſtrong Rock and Foundation of the Chriſtian Religion*) that firſt drove Popery out of theſe kingdoms, and it is this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a check to that immorality, which hath *overſpread the land as a flood.* Can you empty the great Deep, drop by drop? Then you may reform us, by diſſuaſives from particular vices. But let the *righteouſneſs which is of* God *by faith* be brought in, and ſo ſhall its proud waves be ſtayed. Nothing but this can ſtop the mouths of thoſe who "glory

in

in their ſhame, and openly deny the Lord that bought them." They can talk as ſublimely of the Law, as he that hath it written by God in his heart. To hear them ſpeak on this head, might incline one to think, they were not far from the kingdom of God. But take them out of the law into the goſpel; begin with the righteouſneſs of faith, *with Chriſt, the end of the law to every one that believeth,* and thoſe who but now appeared almoſt, if not altogether Chriſtians, ſtand confeſſed the ſons of perdition; as far from life and ſalvation (God be merciful unto them!) as the depth of hell from the heighth of heaven.

9. For this reaſon the Adverſary ſo rages, whenever *Salvation by Faith* is declared to the world. For this reaſon did he ſtir up Earth and Hell, to deſtroy thoſe who firſt preached it. And for the ſame reaſon, knowing that faith alone could overturn the foundations of his kingdom, did he call forth all his forces, and employ all his arts of lies and calumny, to affright that Champion of the Lord of Hoſts, Martin Luther, from reviving it. Nor can we wonder thereat; for as that man of God obſerves, "How would it enrage a proud ſtrong man armed, to be ſtopt and ſet at nought by a little child, coming againſt him with a reed in his hand?" Eſpecially, when he knew that little child would ſurely overthrow him, and tread him under foot. *Even ſo, Lord Jeſus!* Thus hath thy ſtrength been ever *made perfect in weakneſs!* Go forth then, thou little child, that believeſt in him, and *his right-hand ſhall teach thee terrible things!* Though thou art helpleſs and weak as an infant of days, the ſtrong man ſhall not be able to ſtand before thee. Thou ſhalt prevail over him, and ſubdue him, and overthrow him, and trample him under thy feet. Thou ſhalt march on under the great Captain of thy Salvation, *conquering and to conquer*, until all thine enemies are deſtroyed, and *Death is ſwallowed up in Victory.*

Now

Now thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be bleſſing and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The ALMOST CHRISTIAN:

A SERMON,

Preached at St. MARY's, OXFORD, before the UNIVERSITY, on JULY 25, 1741.

ACTS XXVI. 28.

"Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian."

AND many there are who go *thus far:* ever ſince the Chriſtian Religion was in the world, there have been many in every age and nation, who were *almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians.* But ſeeing it avails nothing before God, to go *only thus far*, it highly imports us to conſider,

Firſt, What is implied in being *almoſt*,
Secondly, What in being *altogether a Chriſtian.*

(I.) 1. Now, in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian* is implied, firſt, heathen honeſty. No one, I ſuppoſe, will make any queſtion of this; eſpecially, ſince by heathen honeſty here, I mean, not that which is recommended in the writings of their Philoſophers only, but ſuch as the common heathens expected one of another, and many of them actually practiſed. By the rules of this they were taught, that they ought not to be unjuſt: not to take away their neighbour's goods, either by robbery or theft: not to oppreſs the poor, neither to uſe extortion toward

toward any: not to cheat or over-reach either the poor or rich, in whatſoever commerce they had with them: to defraud no man of his right, and, if it were poſſible, to owe no man any thing.

2. Again, the common heathens allowed, that ſome regard was to be paid to truth as well as to juſtice. And accordingly, they not only held him in abomination, who was forſworn, who called God to witneſs to a lie; but him alſo, who was known to be a ſlanderer of his neighbour, who falſely accuſed any man. And indeed little better did they eſteem wilful liars of any ſort, accounting them the diſgrace of human kind, and the peſts of ſociety.

3. Yet again, there was a ſort of love and aſſiſtance, which they expected one from another. They expected whatever aſſiſtance any one could give another, without prejudice to himſelf. And this they extended not only to thoſe little offices of humanity, which are performed without any expence or labour; but likewiſe, to the feeding the hungry, if they had food to ſpare, the clothing the naked, with their own ſuperfluous raiment; and in general, the giving to any that needed, ſuch things as they needed not themſelves. Thus far (in the loweſt account of it) heathen honeſty went, the firſt thing implied in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian*.

(II.) 4. A ſecond thing implied in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian*, is the having a form of godlineſs, of that godlineſs which is preſcribed in the goſpel of Chriſt; the having the *Outſide of a real Chriſtian*. Accordingly, the *Almoſt Chriſtian* does nothing which the goſpel forbids. He taketh not the name of God in vain: he bleſſeth and curſeth not; he ſweareth not at all, but his communication is yea, yea; nay, nay. He profanes not the day of the Lord, nor ſuffers it to be profaned, even by the ſtranger that is within his gates. He not only avoids all actual adultery, fornication, and uncleanneſs, but every word or look, that either directly or indirectly tends thereto: nay, and all idle words,

abſtaining

abſtaining both from all detraction, backbiting, tale-bearing, evil-ſpeaking, and from *all fooliſh talking and jeſting*, ευτραπελία, a kind of virtue in the heathen Moraliſt's account. Briefly, from all converſation that is not "good to the uſe of edifying," and that conſequently "grieves the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are ſealed to the day of redemption."

5. He abſtains from *wine wherein is exceſs*, from revellings and gluttony. He avoids, as much as in him lies, all ſtrife and contention, continually endeavouring to live peaceably with all men. And if he ſuffers wrong, he avengeth not himſelf, neither returns evil for evil. He is no railer, no brawler, no ſcoffer, either at the faults or infirmities of his neighbour. He does not willingly wrong, hurt, or grieve any man; but in all things acts and ſpeaks by that plain rule, "Whatſoever thou wouldſt not he ſhould do unto thee, that do not thou to another."

6. And in doing good, he does not confine himſelf to cheap and eaſy offices of kindneſs, but labours and ſuffers for the profit of many, that by all means he may help ſome. In ſpite of toil or pain, "Whatſoever his hand findeth to do, he doeth it with all his might:" whether it be for his friends, or for his enemies; for the evil, or for the good. For, being *not ſlothful in this*, or in any *buſineſs*, *as he hath opportunity he doth good*, all manner of good, *to all men*; and to their ſouls as well as their bodies. He reproves the wicked, inſtructs the ignorant, confirms the wavering, quickens the good, and comforts the afflicted. He labours to awaken thoſe that ſleep, to lead thoſe whom God hath already awakened, to the fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, that they may waſh therein and be clean; and to ſtir up thoſe who are ſaved through faith, to adorn the goſpel of Chriſt in all things.

7. He that hath the form of godlineſs, uſes the means of grace; yea, all of them, and at all opportunities.

portunities. He conſtantly frequents the houſe of God; and that not as the manner of ſome is, who come into the preſence of the Moſt High, either loaded with gold and coſtly apparel, or in all the gaudy vanity of dreſs; and either by their unſeaſonable civilities to each other, or the impertinent gaiety of their behaviour, diſclaim all pretenſions to the form, as well as to the power of godlineſs. Would to God there were none even among ourſelves who fall under the ſame condemnation: who come into this houſe, it may be, gazing about, or with all the ſigns of the moſt liſtleſs, careleſs indifference, tho' ſometimes they may *ſeem* to uſe a prayer to God for his bleſſing on what they are entering upon; who during that awful ſervice, are either aſleep or reclined in the moſt convenient poſture for it; or, as tho' they ſuppoſed God was aſleep, talking with one another, or looking round, as utterly void of employment. Neither let theſe be accuſed of the form of godlineſs. No; he who has even this, behaves with ſerioufneſs and attention, in every part of that ſolemn ſervice. More eſpecially when he approaches the table of the Lord, it is not with a light or careleſs behaviour, but with an air, geſture and deportment which ſpeaks nothing elſe, but "God be merciful to me a ſinner."

8. To this if we add, the conſtant uſe of family-prayer, by thoſe who are maſters of families, and the ſetting times apart for private addreſſes to God, with a daily ſerioufneſs of behaviour: he who uniformly practiſes this outward religion, has the form of godlineſs. There needs but one thing more in order to his being *almoſt a Chriſtian*, and that is, SINCERITY.

(III.) 9. By Sincerity I mean, a real, inward principle of Religion, from whence theſe outward actions flow. And indeed, if we have not this, we have not heathen honeſty; no, not ſo much of it as will anſwer the demand of a Heathen Epicu-

rean

rean Poet. Even this poor wretch, in his ſober intervals, is able to teſtify,

Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore;
*Oderunt peccare mali, formidine pœnæ.**

So that if a man only abſtains from doing evil in order to avoid puniſhment, † *Non paſces in cruce corvos*, ſaith the Pagan; there, "Thou haſt thy reward." But even he will not allow ſuch a harmleſs man as this, to be ſo much as a *good heathen*. If then any man, from the ſame motive, viz. to avoid puniſhment, to avoid the loſs of his friends, or his gain, or his reputation, ſhould not only abſtain from doing evil, but alſo do ever ſo much good, yea, and uſe all the means of grace; yet we could not with any propriety ſay, This man is even *almoſt a Chriſtian*. If he has no better principle in his heart, he is only a hypocrite altogether.

10. Sincerity therefore is neceſſarily implied in the being *almoſt a Chriſtian:* a real deſign to ſerve God, a hearty deſire to do his will: It is neceſſarily implied, that a man have a ſincere view of pleaſing God in all things: in all his converſation; in all his actions; in all he does, or leaves undone. This deſign, if any man be *almoſt a Chriſtian*, runs through the whole tenor of his life. This is the moving principle both in his doing good, his abſtaining from evil, and his uſing the ordinances of God.

11. But here it will probably be enquired, Is it poſſible that any man living, ſhould go ſo far as this, and nevertheleſs be *only almoſt a Chriſtian?* What more than this can be implied, in the being *a Chriſtian altogether?* I anſwer, firſt, That it is poſſible to go thus far, and yet be but *almoſt a Chriſtian*; I learn not only from the Oracles of God, but alſo from the ſure teſtimony of Experience.

* Good men avoid ſin from the love of virtue:
Wicked men avoid ſin from a fear of puniſhment.

† Thou ſhalt not be hanged.

11. Brethren,

12. Brethren, Great is *my boldneſs towards you in this behalf.* And *forgive me this wrong*, if I declare my own folly upon the houſe-top, for yours and the goſpel's ſake. Suffer me then to ſpeak freely of myſelf, even as of another man. I am content to be abaſed, ſo ye may be exalted, and to be yet more vile, for the glory of my Lord.

13. I did go thus far for many years, as many of this place can teſtify; uſing diligence to eſchew all evil, and to have a conſcience void of offence; redeeming the time, buying up every opportunity of doing all good to all men; conſtantly and carefully uſing all the public and all the private means of grace; endeavouring after a ſteady ſeriouſneſs of behaviour, at all times and in all places: And God is my record, before whom I ſtand, doing all this in ſincerity; having a real deſign to ſerve God, a hearty deſire to do his will in all things, to pleaſe him who had called me to *fight the good fight*, and to *lay hold on eternal life*. Yet my own conſcience beareth me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that all this time I was but *almoſt a Chriſtian*.

II. If it be enquired, What more than this is implied in the being *altogether a Chriſtian?* I anſwer,

(I.) 1. Firſt, The love of God. For thus ſaith his word, "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength." Such a love of God is this, as engroſſes the whole heart, as takes up all the affections, as fills the entire capacity of the ſoul, and employs the utmoſt extent of all its faculties. He that thus loves the Lord his God, his ſpirit continually *rejoiceth in God his Saviour.* His *delight* is *in the Lord, his* Lord and his All, to whom *in every thing he giveth thanks. All* his *deſire is unto* God, *and the remembrance of his name.* His heart is ever crying out, "Whom

have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſide thee." Indeed, what can he deſire beſide God? Not the world, or the things of the world. For he is "crucified to the world, and the world, crucified to him." He is crucified to the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eye, and the pride of life. Yea, he is dead to pride of every kind: for "love is not puffed up;" but "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," is leſs than nothing in his own eyes.

(II.) 2. The ſecond thing implied in the being *altogether a Chriſtian*, is, The love of our neighbour. For thus ſaid our Lord in the following words, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." If any man aſk, who is my neighbour? we reply, Every man in the world; every child of his, who is the Father of the Spirits of all fleſh. Nor may we anywiſe except our enemies, or the enemies of God and their own ſouls. But every Chriſtian loveth theſe alſo as himſelf, yea, *as Chriſt loveth us*. He that would more fully underſtand what manner of love this is, may conſider St. Paul's deſcription of it. It is "long-ſuffering and kind. It envieth not. It is not raſh or haſty in judging. It is not puffed up," but maketh him that loves, the leaſt, the ſervant of all. Love "doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, *but* becometh all things to all men." She *ſeeketh not her own*, but only the good of others, that they may be ſaved. Love *is not provoked*. It caſteth out wrath, which he who hath, is not "made perfect in love. *It* thinketh no evil. *It* rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. *It* covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

(III.) 3. There is yet one thing more that may be ſeparately conſidered, tho' it cannot actually be ſeparate from the preceding, which is implied in the being *altogether a Chriſtian*, and that is the ground of all, even FAITH. Very excellent things are ſpoken of this throughout the Oracles of God.

"Every

"Every one, ſaid the beloved diſciple, that believeth, is born of God. To as many as received him, gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. And, this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." Yea, our Lord himſelf declares, "He that believeth in the Son, hath everlaſting life; and cometh not into condemnation, but is paſſed from death unto life."

4. But here let no man deceive his own ſoul. "* It is diligently to be noted, the faith which bringeth not forth repentance, and love, and all good works, is not that right living faith which is here ſpoken of, but a dead and deviliſh one. For even the devils believe that Chriſt was born of a virgin, that he wrought all kind of miracles, declaring himſelf very God: that for our ſakes he ſuffered a moſt painful death, to redeem us from death everlaſting: that he roſe again the third day; that he aſcended into heaven, and ſitteth at the right hand of the Father, and at the end of the world, ſhall come again to judge both the quick and dead. Theſe articles of our faith the devils believe, and ſo they believe all that is written in the Old and New Teſtament. And yet for all this faith, they be but devils. They remain ſtill in their damnable eſtate, lacking the very-true chriſtian faith."

5. "The right and true chriſtian faith is," to go on in the words of our own Church, "not only to believe that holy Scripture, and the articles of our faith are true, but alſo to have a ſure truſt and confidence, to be ſaved from everlaſting damnation by Chriſt. It is a ſure truſt and confidence which a man hath in God, that by the merits of Chriſt his ſins *are* forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God,—whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments."

* Homily on the Salvation of Man.

6. Now, whoſoever has this faith, which *purifies the heart*, (by the power of God, who *dwelleth therein*,) from pride, anger, deſire, *from all unrighteouſneſs*, from *all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*; which fills it with love ſtronger than death, both to God and to all mankind; love that doth the works of God, glorying to ſpend and be ſpent for all men, and that endureth with joy, not only the reproach of Chriſt, the being mocked, deſpiſed, and hated of all men, but whatſoever the wiſdom of God permits the malice of men or devils to inflict; whoſoever has this *faith*, thus *working by love*, is not *almoſt only, but altogether a Chriſtian*.

7. But who are the living witneſſes of theſe things? I beſeech you, brethren, as in the preſence of that God, before whom "hell and deſtruction are without a covering: how much more the hearts of the children of men;" that each of you would aſk his own heart, "Am I of that number? Do I ſo far practiſe juſtice, mercy and truth, as even the rules of heathen honeſty require? If ſo, have I the very *outſide* of a Chriſtian? The form of godlineſs? Do I abſtain from evil, from whatſoever is forbidden in the written word of God? Do I, whatever good my hand findeth to do, do it with my might? Do I ſeriouſly uſe all the ordinances of God at all opportunities? And is all this done, with a ſincere deſign and deſire to pleaſe God in all things?

8. Are not many of you conſcious, that you never came thus far: that you have not been even *almoſt a Chriſtian?* That you have not come up to the ſtandard of heathen honeſty? At leaſt, not to the form of chriſtian godlineſs? Much leſs hath God ſeen ſincerity in you, a real deſign of pleaſing him in all things. You never ſo much as intended, to devote all your words and works, your buſineſs, ſtudies, diverſions, to his glory. You never even deſigned or deſired, that whatſoever you did, ſhould be "done in the name of the Lord Jeſus," and

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as ſuch, ſhould be "a ſpiritual ſacrifice, acceptable to God through Chriſt."

9. But ſuppoſing you had, do good deſigns and good deſires make a Chriſtian? By no means, unleſs they are brought to good effect. "Hell is paved, ſaith one, with good intentions." The great queſtion of all then ſtill remains. Is the love of God ſhed abroad in your heart? Can you cry out, "My God and my All?" Do you deſire nothing but him? Are you happy in God? Is he your glory, your delight, your crown of rejoicing? And is this commandment written in your heart, That he who loveth God love his brother alſo? Do you then love your neighbour as yourſelf? Do you love every man, even your enemies, even the enemies of God, as your own ſoul? As Chriſt loved you? Yea, doſt thou believe that Chriſt loved *thee*, and gave himſelf for thee? Haſt thou faith in his blood? Believeſt thou the Lamb of God hath taken away *thy* ſins, and caſt them as a ſtone into the depth of the ſea? That he hath blotted out the hand-writing that was againſt *thee*, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs? Haſt *thou* indeed redemption through his blood, even the remiſſion of *thy* ſins? And doth his ſpirit bear witneſs with *thy* ſpirit, that thou art a child of God?

10. The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who now ſtandeth in the midſt of us, knoweth that if any man die without this faith and this love, good it were for him that he had never been born. Awake then, thou that ſleepeſt, and call upon thy God: call in the day when he may be found. Let him not reſt, till he "make his goodneſs to paſs before thee, till he proclaim unto thee the name of the Lord. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth; keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion and ſin." Let no man perſuade thee by vain words, to reſt ſhort of this prize of thy high calling. But

cry unto him day and night, who, *while we wer without ſtrength, died for the ungodly*, until thou knoweſt in whom thou haſt believed, and canſt ſay, "My Lord and my God." Remember, "always to pray, and not to faint," till thou alſo canſt liſt up thy hand unto heaven, and declare to him that liveth for ever and ever, "Lord, Thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee."

11. May we all thus experience what it is, to be not almoſt only, but altogether Chriſtians! Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus: knowing we have peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt: rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and having the love of God ſhed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt given unto us!

A SERMON

Preached on SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1742, before the UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,

By *CHARLES WESLEY*, M. A. Student of CHRIST-CHURCH.

EPHESIANS V. 14.

"Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light."

IN diſcourſing on theſe words, I ſhall, with the help of God,

Firſt, Deſcribe the ſleepers to whom they are ſpoken.

Secondly, Enforce the exhortation, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead.* And,

Thirdly, Explain the promiſe made to ſuch as do *awake* and *ariſe*; *Chriſt ſhall give thee Light.*

(I.) 1. And

(I.) 1. And firſt, as to the ſleepers here ſpoken to. By ſleep is ſignified the natural ſtate of man: that deep ſleep of the ſoul into which the ſin of *Adam* hath caſt all who ſpring from his loins; that ſupineneſs, indolence, and ſtupidity, that inſenſibility of his real condition, wherein every man comes into the world, and continues till the voice of God awakes him.

2. Now "they that ſleep, ſleep in the night." The ſtate of nature is a ſtate of utter darkneſs; a ſtate wherein "darkneſs covers the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people." The poor unawakened ſinner, how much knowledge ſoever he may have as to other things, has no knowledge of himſelf: in this reſpect, "he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." He knows not that he is a fallen ſpirit, whoſe only buſineſs in the preſent world, is to recover from his fall, to regain that image of God wherein he was created. He ſees *no neceſſity* for *the one thing needful*, even that inward, univerſal change, that *birth from above* (figured out by baptiſm) which is the beginning of that total renovation, that ſanctification of ſpirit, ſoul and body, "without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord."

3. Full of all diſeaſes as he is, he fancies himſelf in perfect health: faſt bound in miſery and iron, he dreams that he is happy, and at liberty. He ſays, peace, peace, while the devil, "as a ſtrong man armed," is in full poſſeſſion of his ſoul. He ſleeps on ſtill, and takes his reſt, though hell is moved from beneath to meet him; though the pit, from whence there is no return, hath opened its mouth to ſwallow him up: a fire is kindled around him, yet he knoweth it not; yea it burns him, yet he lays it not to heart.

4. By one who ſleeps we are therefore to underſtand (and would to God we might all underſtand it) A ſinner ſatisfied in his ſins; contented to remain in his fallen ſtate, to live and die without the image of God; one who is ignorant both of his

diſeaſe

diſeaſe, and of the only remedy for it: one who never was warned, or never regarded the warning voice of God, "to flee from the wrath to come:" one that never yet ſaw he was in danger of hell-fire, or cried out in the earneſtneſs of his ſoul, "What muſt I do to be ſaved?"

5. If this ſleeper be not outwardly vicious, his ſleep is uſually the deepeſt of all: whether he be of the *Laodicean* ſpirit, *neither cold nor hot*; but a quiet, rational, inoffenſive, good-natured profeſſor of the religion of his fathers; or whether he be zealous and orthodox, and "after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion, live a Phariſee;" that is, according to the ſcriptural account, one that *juſtifies himſelf*; one that labours *to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs*, as the ground of his acceptance with God.

6. This is he, who "having a form of godlineſs, denies the power thereof;" yea, and probably reviles it, whereſoever it is found, as mere extravagance and deluſion. Mean while he wretched ſelf-deceiver thanks God, that he "*is not as other men are; adulterers, unjuſt, extortioners:*" no, he doth no wrong to any man. He *faſts twice in a week*, uſes all the means of grace, is conſtant at church and ſacrament: yea, and *gives tythes of all that he has*, does all the good that he can: *touching the righteouſneſs of the law*, he is *blameleſs*: he wants nothing of godlineſs but the power; nothing of religion, but the ſpirit; nothing of chriſtianity, but the truth and the life.

7. But know ye not, that however highly eſteemed, among men, *ſuch a Chriſtian* as this may be, he is an abomination in the ſight of God, and an heir of every woe, which the Son of God, yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, denounces againſt *Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites?* He hath "made clean the outſide of the cup and the platter," but within is full of all filthineſs. "An evil diſeaſe cleaveth ſtill unto him, ſo that his inward parts are very

wickedneſs." Our Lord fitly compares him to a *painted ſepulchre*, which "appears beautiful without;" but nevertheleſs is "full of dead mens bones and of all uncleanneſs." The bones indeed are no longer dry; the ſinews and fleſh are come upon them, and the ſkin covers them above: but there is no breath in them, no ſpirit of the living God. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt he is none of his. Ye are Chriſt's, if ſo be that the ſpirit of God dwell in you." But if not, God knoweth that ye abide in death, even until now.

8. This is another character of the ſleeper here ſpoken to. He abides in death, though he knows it not. He is dead unto God, "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins." For, "to be carnally minded is death." Even as it is written, "By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin: and ſo death paſſed upon all men," not only temporal death, but likewiſe ſpiritual and eternal. "In that day that thou eateſt (ſaid God to Adam) Thou ſhalt ſurely die." Not bodily (unleſs as he then became mortal) but ſpiritually: thou ſhalt loſe the life of thy ſoul; thou ſhalt die to God; ſhalt be ſeparated from him, thy eſſential life and happineſs.

9. Thus firſt was diſſolved the vital union of our ſoul with God: inſomuch that *in the midſt of* natural *life, we are* now *in* ſpiritual *death*. And herein we remain till the ſecond Adam becomes a quickening ſpirit to us, till he raiſes the dead, the dead in ſin, in pleaſure, riches, or honours. But before any dead ſoul can live, he *hears* (hearkens to) *the voice of the Son of God*: he is made ſenſible of his loſt eſtate, and receives the ſentence of death in himſelf. He knows himſelf to be "dead while he liveth," dead to God, and all the things of God: having no more power to perform the actions of a living Chriſtian, than a dead body to perform the functions of a living man.

10. And moſt certain it is, that one dead in ſin, has not "ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern ſpiritual good

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and evil." "Having eyes, he ſees not, he hath ears and hears not." He doth not "taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious." He "hath not ſeen God at any time, nor heard his voice, nor handled the word of life." In vain is the name of Jeſus "like ointment poured forth, and all his garments ſmell of myrrh, aloes, and caſſia." The ſoul that ſleepeth in death hath no perception of any objects of this kind. His heart is *paſt feeling*, and underſtandeth none of theſe things.

11. And hence, having no ſpiritual ſenſes, no inlets of ſpiritual knowledge, the natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God; nay, he is ſo far from receiving them, that whatſoever is ſpiritually diſcerned is mere fooliſhneſs unto him. He is not content with being utterly ignorant of ſpiritual things, but he denies the very exiſtence of them. And ſpiritual ſenſation itſelf is to him, the fooliſhneſs of folly. "How, ſaith he, can theſe things be?" How can any man *know*, that he is alive to God? Even as you know, that your body is now alive. Faith is the life of the ſoul: and if ye have this life abiding in you, ye want no marks to evidence it *to yourſelf*, but that ἔλεγχος πνεύματος, that divine conſciouſneſs, that *witneſs of* God, which is more and greater than ten thouſand human witneſſes.

12. If he doth not now bear witneſs with thy ſpirit, that thou art a child of God, O that he might convince thee, thou poor unawakened ſinner, by his demonſtration and power, that thou art a child of the devil! O that as I propheſy, there might now be "a noiſe and a ſhaking," and may "the bones come together, bone to his bone!" Then "come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe on theſe ſlain, that they may live! And do not ye harden your hearts, and reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, who even now is come to *convince* you *of ſin*, "becauſe you believe not on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

(II.) 1. Where-

(II.) 1. Wherefore, "Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead." God calleth thee now by my mouth; and bids thee know thyſelf, thou fallen ſpirit, thy true ſtate and only concern below. "What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? Ariſe! Call upon thy God, if ſo be thy God will think upon thee, that thou periſh not." A mighty tempeſt is ſtirred up round about thee, and thou art ſinking into the depths of perdition, the gulph of God's judgments. If thou wouldſt eſcape them, caſt thyſelf into them. "Judge thyſelf, and thou ſhalt not be judged of the Lord."

2. Awake, awake! Stand up this moment, leſt thou "drink at the Lord's hand the cup of his fury." Stir up thyſelf "to lay hold on the Lord, the Lord thy righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave! Shake thyſelf from the duſt." At leaſt, let the earthquake of God's threatenings ſhake thee. Awake and cry out with the trembling gaoler, "What muſt I do to be ſaved?" And never reſt, till thou believeſt on the Lord Jeſus, with a faith which is his gift, by the operation of his ſpirit.

3. If I ſpeak to any one of you more than to another, it is to thee, who thinkeſt thyſelf unconcerned in this exhortation. *I have a meſſage from God unto thee.* In his name I *warn* thee *to flee from the wrath to come.* Thou unholy ſoul, ſee thy picture in condemned Peter, lying in the dark dungeon, between the ſoldiers, bound with two chains, the keepers before the door keeping the priſon. The night is far ſpent, the morning is at hand, when thou art to be brought forth to execution. And in theſe dread circumſtances, thou art faſt aſleep; thou art faſt aſleep in the devil's arms, on the brink of the pit, in the jaws of everlaſting deſtruction.

4. O may the angel of the Lord come upon thee, and the light ſhine into thy priſon! And mayeſt thou feel the ſtroke of an almighty hand, raiſing thee with, "Ariſe up quickly, gird thyſelf

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and bind on thy ſandals, caſt thy garment about thee, and follow me."

5. Awake, thou everlaſting ſpirit, out of thy dream of worldly happineſs. Did not God create thee for himſelf? Then, thou canſt not reſt, till thou reſteſt in him. Return thou wanderer. Fly back to thy ark. This is not thy home. Think not of building tabernacles here. Thou art but a ſtranger, a ſojourner upon earth: a creature of a day, but juſt launching out into an unchangeable ſtate. Make haſte. Eternity is at hand. Eternity depends on this moment. An eternity of happineſs, or an eternity of miſery!

6. In what ſtate is thy ſoul? Was God, while I am yet ſpeaking, to require it of thee, art thou ready to meet death and judgment? Canſt thou ſtand in his ſight, "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?" Art thou "meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light?" Haſt thou "fought a good fight and kept the faith?" Haſt thou ſecured the one thing needful? Haſt thou recovered the image of God, even righteouſneſs and true holineſs? Haſt thou put off the old man and put on the new? Art thou clothed upon with Chriſt?

7. Haſt thou oil in thy lamp? Grace in thy heart? Doſt thou "love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength? Is that mind in thee, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus?" Art thou a Chriſtian indeed? That is, a new creature? Are old things paſt away, and all things become new?

8. Art thou "a partaker of the divine nature? Knoweſt thou not, that Chriſt is in thee, except thou be reprobate?" Knoweſt thou, that God "dwelleth in thee, and thou in God, by his ſpirit which he hath given thee?" Knoweſt thou not, that "thy body is a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, which thou haſt of God?" Haſt thou the witneſs in thyſelf? The earneſt of thine inheritance? Art thou "ſealed by that ſpirit of promiſe, unto the

day

day of redemption?" Haſt thou received the Holy Ghoſt? Or doſt thou ſtart at the queſtion, not knowing whether there be any Holy Ghoſt?

9. If it offends thee, be thou aſſured, that thou neither art a Chriſtian, nor deſireſt to be one. Nay, thy very prayer is turned into ſin; and thou haſt ſolemnly mocked God this very day, by praying for the inſpiration of his Holy Spirit, when thou didſt not believe there was any ſuch thing to be received.

10. Yet on the authority of God's word and our own Church, I muſt repeat the queſtion, "Haſt thou received the Holy Ghoſt?" If thou haſt not, thou art not yet a Chriſtian. For a Chriſtian is a man, that is "anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power." Thou art not yet made a partaker of pure religion and undefiled. Doſt thou know what religion is? That it is, a participation of the divine nature, the life of God in the ſoul of man: "Chriſt formed in the heart, Chriſt in thee, the hope of glory." Happineſs and holineſs; heaven begun upon earth. "A kingdom of God within thee: not meat and drink," no outward thing: "but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt?" An everlaſting kingdom brought into thy ſoul; a "peace of God, that paſſeth all underſtanding; a joy unſpeakable and full of glory?"

11. Knoweſt thou, that "in Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion; but faith that worketh by love;" but a new creation? Seeſt thou the neceſſity of that inward change, that ſpiritual birth, that life from the dead? That holineſs? And art thou thoroughly convinced, that without it, no man ſhall ſee the Lord? Art thou labouring after it? "Giving all diligence, to make thy calling and election ſure? Working out thy ſalvation with fear and trembling? Agonizing to enter in at the ſtraight gate?" Art thou in earneſt about thy ſoul? And, canſt thou tell the Searcher

of hearts, "Thou, O God, art the thing that I long for!" Lord, thou knoweſt all things! Thou knoweſt that I *would* love thee!

12. Thou hopeſt to be ſaved;—but what reaſon haſt thou to give of the hope that is in thee? Is it becauſe thou haſt done no harm? Or, becauſe thou haſt done much good? Or, becauſe thou art not like other men; but wiſe, or learned, or honeſt and morally good? Eſteemed of men, and of a fair reputation? Alas, all this will never bring thee to God. It is in his account lighter than vanity. Doſt thou know Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent? Hath he taught thee, that "by grace we are ſaved through faith; and that not of ourſelves; it is the gift of God: not of works leſt any man ſhould boaſt?" Haſt thou received the faithful ſaying as the whole foundation of thy hope, "that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners?" Haſt thou learned what that meaneth, "I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance? I am not ſent, but to the loſt ſheep?" Art thou (he that heareth, let him underſtand!) Loſt? Dead? *Damned already?*——Doſt thou know thy deſerts? Doſt thou feel thy wants? Art thou *poor in ſpirit? Mourning* for God and refuſing to be comforted? Is the prodigal *come to himſelf*, and well-content to be therefore thought *beſide himſelf*; by thoſe who are ſtill feeding upon the huſks which he hath left? Art thou willing to live godly in Chriſt Jeſus? And doſt thou therefore ſuffer perſecution? Do men ſay all manner of evil againſt thee falſely, for the Son of man's ſake?

13. O, that in all theſe queſtions ye may hear the voice that wakes the dead, and feel that hammer of the word, which breaketh the rock in pieces!—"If ye will hear his voice to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts." Now *awake thou that ſleepeſt* in ſpiritual death, that thou ſleep not in death eternal! Feel thy loſt eſtate, and *ariſe from the dead*. Leave thine old companions in ſin

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and death. Follow thou Jeſus, and let the dead bury their dead. "Save thyſelf from this untoward generation. Come out from among them, and be thou ſeparate, and touch not the unclean thing, and the Lord ſhall receive thee, Chriſt ſhall give thee light."

(III.) 1. This promiſe I come, laſtly, to explain. And how encouraging a conſideration is this, that whoſoever thou art who obeyeſt his call, thou canſt not ſeek his face in vain. If thou even now *awakeſt and ariſeſt from the dead*, he hath bound himſelf to *give thee light*. *The Lord ſhall give* thee *grace and glory*; the light of his grace here, and the light of his glory, when thou receiveſt the crown that fadeth not away. "Thy light ſhall break forth as the morning, and thy darkneſs be as the noon-day. God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhall ſhine in thy heart; to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. On them that fear the Lord ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his wings. And in that day it ſhall be ſaid unto thee, Ariſe, ſhine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee." For Chriſt ſhall reveal himſelf in thee. And he is the true Light.

2. God is light, and will give himſelf to every awakened ſinner, that waiteth for him: and thou ſhalt then be a temple of the living God, and Chriſt ſhall *dwell in thy heart by faith*: and "being rooted and grounded in love, thou ſhalt be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth of that love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge, that thou mayeſt be filled with all the fulneſs of God."

3. Ye ſee your calling, brethren. We are called to be "an habitation of God through his Spirit:" And through his ſpirit dwelling in us, to be ſaints, here, and partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. So exceeding great are the promiſes

which are given unto us, actually given unto us who believe. For by faith "we receive, not the ſpirit of the world, but the ſpirit which is of God," the ſum of all the promiſes, "that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God."

4. The Spirit of Chriſt is that great gift of God, which at ſundry times, and in divers manners he hath promiſed to man, and hath fully beſtowed ſince the time that Chriſt was glorified. Thoſe promiſes before made to the Fathers, he hath thus fulfilled: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes. * I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring." †

5. Ye may all be living witneſſes of theſe things: of remiſſion of ſins, and the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. "If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth. Who among you is there, that feareth the Lord, and yet walketh on in darkneſs, and hath no light?" I aſk thee in the name of Jeſus, believeſt thou that his arm is not ſhortened at all? That he is ſtill mighty to ſave? That he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever? That he hath now power, on earth to forgive ſins? "Son, be of good chear; thy ſins are forgiven." God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven thee. Receive this, "not as the word of man; but as it is, indeed, the word of God;" and thou art juſtified freely thro' faith. Thou ſhalt be ſanctified alſo through faith which is in Jeſus, and ſhall ſet to thy ſeal, even thine, that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

6. Men and brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you. And ſuffer ye the word of exhortation, even from one the leaſt eſteemed in the Church. Your conſcience beareth you witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that theſe things are ſo, if ſo be ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious. "This is eternal life, to

* Ezek. xxxvi. 27. † Iſaiah xliv. 3.

know

know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent." This experimental knowledge, and this alone, is true Chriſtianity. He is a Chriſtian, who hath received the Spirit of Chriſt. He is not a Chriſtian, who hath not received him. Neither is it poſſible to have received him and not know it. "For at that day* (when he cometh, ſaith our Lord) ye ſhall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. This is that ſpirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you."

7. The world cannot receive him, but utterly reject the promiſe of the Father, contradicting and blaſpheming. But every Spirit which confeſſeth not this, is not of God. Yea, "this is that Spirit of Antichriſt, whereof ye have heard, that it ſhould come into the world, and even now it is in the world." He is Antichriſt whoſoever denies the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, or that the indwelling Spirit of God is the common privilege of all believers, the bleſſing of the goſpel, the unſpeakable gift, the univerſal promiſe, the criterion of a real Chriſtian.

8. It nothing helps them to ſay, "We do not deny the *aſſiſtance* of God's Spirit; but only this *inſpiration*, this *receiving the Holy Ghoſt*, and being *ſenſible* of it. It is only this *feeling of the* Spirit, this being *moved* by the Spirit, or *filled* with it, which we deny to have any place in ſound Religion." But in *only denying this*, you deny the whole Scriptures, the whole truth and promiſe and teſtimony of God.

9. Our own excellent Church knows nothing of this deviliſh diſtinction: but ſpeaks plainly of § "feeling the Spirit of Chriſt;" of being ‡ "moved by the Holy Ghoſt," and knowing and § "feeling

* John xiv. 20. † Art. 11. ‡ Office of conſecrating Prieſts. § Viſitation of the Sick.

there is no other name than that of Jeſus," whereby we can receive life and ſalvation. She teaches us all to pray for the * "inſpiration of the Holy Spirit," yea, that we may be "filled with the Holy Ghoſt. † Nay, and every Preſbyter of her's profeſſes to receive the Holy Ghoſt by the impoſition of hands. Therefore to deny any of theſe, is in effect, to renounce the Church of England, as well as the whole Chriſtian revelation.

10. But *the wiſdom of* God was always *fooliſhneſs with men.* No marvel then, that the great myſtery of the goſpel, ſhould be now alſo "hid from the wiſe and prudent," as well as in the days of old: that it ſhould be almoſt univerſally denied, ridiculed and exploded as mere frenzy: and that all who dare avow it ſtill, are branded with the names of madmen and enthuſiaſts. This is *that falling away* which was to come: that general apoſtaſy, of all orders and degrees of men, which we even now find to have overſpread the earth. "Run to and fro in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, and ſee if ye can find a man;" a man that loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and ſerveth him with all his ſtrength? How does our own land mourn (to look no farther) under the overflowings of ungodlineſs? What villanies of every kind are committed day by day; yea, too often with impunity, by thoſe who ſin with a high hand, and glory in their ſhame? Who can reckon up the oaths, curſes, profaneneſs, blaſphemies, the lying, ſlandering, evil-ſpeaking, the ſabbath-breaking, gluttony, drunkenneſs, revenge, the whoredoms, adulteries, and various uncleanneſs, the frauds, injuſtice, oppreſſion, extortion, which overſpread our land as a flood?

11. And even among thoſe who have kept themſelves pure from theſe groſſer abominations; how much anger and pride, how much ſloth and idle-

* Collect before the Holy Communion. † Order of Confirmation.

neſs,

neſs, how much ſoftneſs and effeminacy, how much luxury and ſelf-indulgence, how much covetouſneſs and ambition, how much thirſt of praiſe, how much love of the world, how much fear of man is to be found? Mean while, how little of true religion? For where is he that loveth either God or his neighbour, as he hath given us commandment? On the one hand are thoſe who have not ſo much as the form of godlineſs: on the other thoſe who have the form only; there ſtands the *open*, there the *painted* ſepulchre. So that in very deed, whoſoever were earneſtly to behold any public gathering together of the people, (I fear, thoſe in our Churches are not to be excepted) might eaſily percieve, "that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees:" the one having almoſt as little concern about religion, as if there were *no reſurrection, neither Angel, nor Spirit*; and the other make it a mere lifeleſs form, a dull round of external performances, without either true faith, or the love of God, or joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

12. Would to God I could except us of this place. *Brethren, my heart's deſire, and prayer to God, for you is, That ye may be ſaved* from this overflowing of ungodlineſs, and that here may its proud waves be ſtayed! But is it ſo indeed? God knoweth, yea, and our own conſcience, it is not. Ye have not kept yourſelves pure. Corrupt are we alſo and abominable; and few are there that underſtand any more; few that worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth. We too are "a generation that ſet not our hearts aright, and whoſe ſpirit cleaveth not ſtedfaſtly unto God:" he hath appointed us indeed to be "the ſalt of the earth; but if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

13. And "ſhall I not viſit for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? Shall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" Yea, we know not how ſoon he

may

may ſay to the ſword, *Sword, go through the land!* He hath given us long ſpace to repent. He lets us alone this year alſo: but he warns and awakens us by thunder. His judgments are abroad in the earth. And we have all reaſon to expect the heavieſt of all, even that he "ſhould come unto us quickly, and remove our candleſtick out of its place, except we repent and do the firſt works;" unleſs we return to the principles of the Reformation, the truth and ſimplicity of the goſpel. Perhaps we are now reſiſting the laſt effort of divine grace to ſave us. Perhaps we have well nigh *filled up the meaſure of our iniquities*, by rejecting the counſel of God againſt ourſelves, and caſting out his Meſſengers.

14. O God, *in the midſt of wrath remember mercy!* Be glorified in our reformation, not in our deſtruction. Let us hear the rod, and him that appointed it. "Now that thy judgments are abroad in the earth, let the inhabitants of the world learn righteouſneſs."

15. My brethren, it is high time for us to awake out of ſleep; before the *great trumpet of the Lord be blown*, and our land become a field of blood. O may we ſpeedily ſee the things that make for our peace, before they are hid from our eyes! "Turn thou us, O good Lord, and let thine anger ceaſe from us. O Lord, look down from heaven, behold and viſit this vine;" and cauſe us to know the time of our viſitation. "Help us, O God of our ſalvation, for the glory of thy name; O deliver us, and be merciful to our ſins, for thy name's ſake. And ſo we will not go back from thee: O let us live, and we ſhall call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord of hoſts, ſhew the light of thy countenance, and we ſhall be whole."

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Scriptural

Scriptural Chriſtianity.

A SERMON

Preached at St. MARY's OXFORD, before the UNIVERSITY, Auguſt 24, 1744.

"Whoſoever heareth the ſound of the trumpet, and "taketh not warning, if the ſword come and take "him away, his blood ſhall be upon his own head." Ezek. xxiii. 4.

ACTS IV. 31.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt."

1 THE ſame expreſſion occurs in the ſecond chapter, where we read, "When the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all (the Apoſtles with the women, and the mother of Jeſus, and his brethren) with one accord in one place. And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt." * One immediate effect whereof was, "They began to ſpeak with other tongues;" † inſomuch that both the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the other ſtrangers who "came together, when this was noiſed abroad, heard them ſpeak, in their ſeveral tongues, the wonderful works of God." ‡

2. In this chapter we read, that when the Apoſtles and brethren had been praying, and praiſing God, "the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt" § Not that we find any viſible appearance

* Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. † Ver. 4. ‡ Ver. 6. § Acts iv. 31.

here,

here, ſuch as had been in the former inſtance: nor are we informed that the *extraordinary gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, were then given to all or any of them; ſuch as "the gift of healing, of working other miracles, of propheſy, of diſcerning ſpirits: the ſpeaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues." *

3. Whether theſe gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were deſigned to remain in the Church throughout all ages; and whether or no they will be reſtored at the nearer approach of the *reſtitution of all things*, are queſtions which is not needful to decide. But it is needful to obſerve this, that even in the infancy of the Church, God divided them with a ſparing hand. Were all even then Prophets? Were all workers of miracles? Had all the gifts of healing? Did all ſpeak with tongues? No, in nowiſe. Perhaps not one in a thouſand. Probably none but the Teachers in the Church, and only ſome of them.† It was therefore for a more excellent purpoſe than this, that *they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.*

4. It was, to give them (what none can deny to be eſſential to all Chriſtians in all ages) the mind which was in Chriſt, thoſe holy fruits of the Spirit, which whoſoever hath not, is none of his: to fill them with "love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs:" § to endue them with faith, (perhaps it might be rendered, fidelity) with meekneſs and temperance: to enable them to crucify the fleſh with its affections and luſts, its paſſions and deſires; and, in conſequence of that inward change, to fulfil all outward righteouſneſs, "to walk as Chriſt alſo walked, in the ‖ work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love."

5. Without buſying ourſelves then in curious, needleſs enquiries touching thoſe *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit, let us take a nearer view of theſe his *ordinary* fruits; which we are aſſured will remain throughout all ages: of that great work of God

* 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10. † 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29, 30.
§ Gal. v. 22, 23, 24. ‖ 1 Theſſ. i. 3.

among

among the children of men, which we are uſed to expreſs by one word, *Chriſtianity*: not as it implies a ſet of opinions, a ſyſtem of doctrines, but as it refers to men's hearts and lives. And this *Chriſtianity* it may be uſeful to conſider under three diſtinct views.

I. As beginning to exiſt in individuals.
II. As ſpreading from one to another.
III. As covering the earth.

I deſign to cloſe theſe conſiderations with a plain practical Application.

I. And firſt, let us conſider Chriſtianity in its riſe, as beginning to exiſt in individuals.

Suppoſe then one of thoſe who heard the Apoſtle Peter preaching Repentance and remiſſion of ſins, was pricked to the heart, was convinced of ſin, repented, and then believed in Jeſus. By this faith of the operation of God, which was the very ſubſtance or ſubſiſtence of things hoped for, ‖ the demonſtrative evidence of inviſible things, he inſtantly received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby he now cried Abba, Father! § Now firſt it was that he could call Jeſus Lord, by the Holy Ghoſt, * the Spirit itſelf bearing witneſs with his ſpirit that he was a child of God. † Now it was that he could truly ſay, "I live not, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himſelf for me." **

2. This then was the very eſſence of his faith, a divine ἔλεγχος †† of the love of God the Father, through the Son of his love, to him a ſinner, now accepted in the beloved. And §§ "being juſtified by faith, he had peace with God," yea "the peace of God ruling in his heart:" a peace which paſſing all underſtanding, (πάνλα νῦν, all barely rational conception) kept his heart and mind from all doubt and

‖ Heb. xi. 1. § Rom. viii. 15. * 1 Cor. xii. 3. Rom. viii. 15. ** Gal. ii. 20. †† Evidence or conviction.
§§ Rom. v. 1.

fear,

fear, through the knowledge of him in whom he had believed. He could not therefore "be afraid of any evil tidings; for his heart ſtood faſt believing in the Lord." He feared not what man could do unto him, knowing the very hairs of his head were all numbered. He feared not all the powers of darkneſs, whom God was daily bruiſing under his feet. Leaſt of all was he afraid to die, nay, he deſired to depart and be with Chriſt; * who † "through death had deſtroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death, were all their life-time, till then, ſubject to bondage."

3. His ſoul therefore magnified the Lord, and his ſpirit rejoiced in God his Saviour. "He rejoiced in him with joy unſpeakable, who had reconciled him to God, even the Father: in whom he had redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins." He rejoiceth in that witneſs of God's Spirit with his ſpirit, that he was a child of God: and more abundantly, in hope of the glory of God, in hope of the glorious image of God, and full renewal of his ſoul in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and in hope of that crown of glory, that "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

4. The love of God was alſo ſhed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghoſt which was given unto him." ‖ "Becauſe he was a ſon, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father!" § And that filial love of God was continually increaſed by the witneſs he had in himſelf, ¶ of God's pardoning love to him, by "beholding what manner of love it was, which the Father had beſtowed upon him, that he ſhould be called a child of God **" So that God was the deſire of his eyes, and the joy of his heart; his portion in time and in eternity.

5. He that thus *loved* God, could not but love his brother alſo; and "not in word alone, but in

* Phil. i. 23. † Heb. ii. 15. ‖ Rom. v. 5. § Gal. iv. 6.
¶ 1 John v. 10. ** 1 John iii. 1.

deed

deed and in truth." "If God, ſaid he, ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another," * Yea, every ſoul of man, as the mercy of God is over all his works.† Agreeably hereto, the affection of this lover of God, embraced all mankind for his ſake; not excepting thoſe whom he had never ſeen in the fleſh, or thoſe of whom he knew nothing more than that they were *the offspring of God*; for whoſe ſouls his Son had died; not excepting the *evil* and *unthankful*, and leaſt of all his enemies, thoſe who hated, or perſecuted, or deſpitefully uſed him for his Maſter's ſake. Theſe had a peculiar place both in his heart and in his prayers. He loved them *even as Chriſt loved us.*

6. And love is not puffed up.‖ It abaſes to the duſt every ſoul wherein it dwells. Accordingly he was lowly of heart, little, mean, and vile in his own eyes. He neither ſought nor received the praiſe of men, but that which cometh of God only. He was meek and long-ſuffering, gentle to all, and eaſy to be intreated. Faithfulneſs and truth never forſook him; they were "bound about his neck, and wrote on the table of his heart." By the ſame ſpirit he was enabled to be temperate in all things, refraining his ſoul even as a weaned child. He was "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him:" ſuperior to "the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eye, and the pride of life." By the ſame Almighty love was he ſaved, both from paſſion and pride, from luſt and vanity, from ambition and covetouſneſs, and from every temper which was not in Chriſt.

7. It may eaſily be believed, he who had this love in his heart, would work no evil to his neighbour. It was impoſſible for him, knowingly and deſignedly, to do harm to any man. He was at the greateſt diſtance from cruelty and wrong, from any unjuſt or unkind action. With the ſame care did he "ſet a watch before his mouth, and keep the door

* 1 John iv. 11. † Pſal. cxlv. 9. ‖ 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

of his lips;" leſt he ſhould offend in tongue, either againſt juſtice, or againſt mercy or truth. He put away all lying, falſehood and fraud; neither was guile found in his mouth. He ſpake evil of no man; nor did any unkind word ever come out of his lips.

8. And as he was deeply ſenſible of the truth of that word, *without me ye can do nothing*, and conſequently, of the need he had to be watered of God every moment; ſo he continued daily in all the ordinances of God, the ſtated channels of his grace to man. In the Apoſtle's doctrine or teaching, receiving that food of the ſoul with all readineſs of heart, in the breaking of bread, which he found to be the communion of the body of Chriſt, and *in the prayers* and praiſes offered up by the great congregation. And thus he daily *grew in grace*, increaſing in ſtrength, in the knowledge and love of God.

9. But it did not ſatisfy him, barely to abſtain from doing evil. His ſoul was athirſt to do good. The language of his heart continually was, "My father worketh hitherto, and I work." My Lord went about doing good; and ſhall not I tread in his ſteps? As he had opportunity therefore, if he could do no good of a higher kind, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, helped the fatherleſs or ſtranger, viſited and aſſiſted them that were ſick or in priſon. He gave all his goods to the poor. He rejoiced to labour or to ſuffer for them; and wherein ſoever he might profit another, there eſpecially to *deny himſelf*. He counted nothing too dear to part with for them, as well remembering the word of his Lord, "Inſomuch as ye have done it unto the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

10. Such was *Chriſtianity* in its riſe. Such was a Chriſtian in ancient days. Such was every one of thoſe, who when they heard the threatenings of the Chief Prieſts and Elders, "liſt up their voice to God with one accord, and were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt. The multitude of them that believed,

* Matt. xxv. 40.

were

were of one heart and of one ſoul." (So did the love of him in whom they had believed, conſtrain them to love one another.) "Neither ſaid any of them that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed was his own; but they had all things common." So fully were they crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them. "And they continued ſtedfaſtly with one accord in the Apoſtles doctrine, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. And great grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes ſold them, and brought the prices of the things that were ſold, and laid them down at the Apoſtles feet; and diſtribution was made unto every man, according as he had need."*

II. 1. Let us take a view, in the ſecond place, of this *Chriſtianity*, as ſpreading from one to another, and ſo gradually making its way into the world. For ſuch was the will of God concerning it, who "did not light a candle to put it under a buſhel, but that it might give light to all that were in the houſe." And this our Lord had declared to his firſt diſciples, "Ye are the ſalt of the earth, the light of the world;" at the ſame time that he gave that general command, "Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."†

2. And, indeed, ſuppoſing a few of theſe lovers of mankind, to ſee "the whole world lying in wickedneſs," Can we believe they would be unconcerned at the ſight, at the miſery of thoſe for whom their Lord died? Would not their bowels yearn over them, and their hearts melt away for very trouble? Could they then ſtand idle all the day long, even were there no command from him whom they loved? Rather would they not labour, by all poſſible means, to pluck ſome of theſe brands out of the burning? Undoubtedly they would: they would ſpare no pains to bring back whomſoever they

* Acts iv. 31.—35. † Matt. v. 13, 14, 15, 16.

could of thoſe poor "ſheep that had gone aſtray, to the great Shepherd and Biſhop of their ſouls."*

3. So the Chriſtians of old did. They laboured, having opportunity,† "to do good to all men," warning them to flee from the wrath to come; now, now, to eſcape the damnation of hell. They declared,‖ "The times of ignorance God winked at; but now he calleth all men every where to repent." They cried aloud, "Turn ye, turn ye from your ruin. §" They ¶ reaſoned with them of temperance and righteouſneſs, or juſtice, of the virtues oppoſite to their reigning ſins, and of judgment to come, of the wrath of God which would ſurely be executed on evil doers in that day when he ſhould judge the world.

4. They endeavoured herein to ſpeak to every man ſeverally as he had need. To the careleſs, to thoſe who lay unconcerned in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, they thundered, "Awake thou that ſleepeſt; ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light:" but to thoſe who were already awakened out of ſleep, and groaning under a ſenſe of the wrath of God, their language was, "We have an Advocate with the Father; he is the Propitiation for our ſins." Mean time thoſe who had believed, they "provoked to love and to good works; to patient continuance in well-doing; and to abound more and more in that holineſs, without which no man can ſee the Lord."**

5. And their labour was not in vain in the Lord. "His word ran and was glorified. It grew mightily and prevailed." But ſo much the more did offences prevail alſo. The world in general were offended, "becauſe they teſtified of it, that the works thereof were evil."†† The men of pleaſure were offended, not only becauſe theſe men were made, as it were, to reprove their thoughts. ("He profeſſeth, ſaid they, to have the knowledge of God: he calleth himſelf the child of the Lord: his life is not like

* 1 Pet. ii. 25. † Gal. vi. 10. ‖ Acts xvii. 30. § Ezek. xviii. 30. ¶ Acts xxiv. 25. ** Heb. xii. 14. †† John vii. 7.

other

other men's: his ways are of another faſhion: he abſtaineth from our ways, as from filthineſs: he maketh his boaſt, that God is his Father." *) But much more, becauſe ſo many of their companions were taken away, and would no more run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot. † The men of reputation were offended, becauſe, as the goſpel ſpread, they declined in the eſteem of the people; and becauſe many no longer dared to give them flattering titles, or to pay man the homage due to God only. The men of trade called one another together, and ſaid, § "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. But ye ſee and hear that theſe men have perſuaded and turned away much people. So that this our craft is in danger to be ſet at nought." Above all, the men of religion, ſo called, the men of *outſide* religion, "the ſaints of the world." were offended and ready at every opportunity to cry out, ‖ "Men of Iſrael, help! we have found theſe men! Peſtilent fellows, movers of ſedition throughout the world. ¶ Theſe are the men that teach all men, every where, againſt the people, and againſt the law."

6. Thus it was that the heavens grew black with clouds, and the ſtorm gathered amain. For the more Chriſtianity ſpread, the more hurt was done, in the account of thoſe who received it not, and the number increaſed of thoſe who were more and more enraged at theſe ** Men who thus turned the world upſide down; inſomuch that they more and more cried out, Away with ſuch fellows from the earth; it is not fit that they ſhould live, yea, and ſincerely believed, that whoſoever ſhould kill them would do God ſervice.

7. Mean while they did not fail to †† caſt out their name as evil: ſo that this ‖‖ "ſect was every where ſpoken againſt." ¶¶ Men ſaid all manner of evil of them, even as had been done of the Prophets that were before them. And whatſoever

* Wiſd. i. 13, 14, 15, 19. † 1 Pet. iv. 4. § Acts xix. 25, &c. ‖ Acts xxiv. 5. ¶ Acts xxi. 28. ** Acts xvii. 6. †† Luke vi. 22. ‖‖ Acts xxxviii. 22. ¶¶ Matt. v. 11.

any would affirm, others would believe. So that offences grew as the ſtars of heaven for multitude. And hence aroſe, at the time fore-ordained of the Father, perſecution in all its forms. Some, for a ſeaſon, ſuffered only ſhame and reproach; ſome, "the ſpoiling of their goods; ſome had trials of mocking and ſcourging, ſome of bonds and impriſonment; and others reſiſted unto blood."*

8. Now it was that the pillars of hell were ſhaken, and the kingdom of God ſpread more and more. Sinners were every where "turned from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." He gave his children, "ſuch a mouth, and ſuch wiſdom, as all their adverſaries could not reſiſt." And their lives were of equal force with their words. But above all, their ſufferings ſpake to all the world. They "approved themſelves the ſervants of God, in afflictions, in neceſſities; in diſtreſſes; in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours; in perils in the ſea, in perils in the wilderneſs; in wearineſs and painfulneſs, in hunger and in thirſt, in cold and nakedneſs."† And when having fought the good fight, they were led as ſheep to the ſlaughter, and offered up on the ſacrifice and ſervice of their faith, then the blood of each found a voice, and the heathen owned, *He being dead, yet ſpeaketh.*

9. Thus did Chriſtianity ſpread itſelf in the earth. But how ſoon did the tares appear with the wheat? And the *myſtery of iniquity* work as well as the *myſtery of godlineſs!* How ſoon did Satan find a ſeat, even *in the temple of God!* "Till the woman fled in the wilderneſs, and the faithful were again miniſhed from the children of men." Here we tread a beaten path: the ſtill increaſing corruptions of the ſucceeding generations, have been largely deſcribed from time to time, by thoſe witneſſes God raiſed up, to ſhew that he had "built his Church upon a Rock, and the gates of hell ſhould not wholly prevail againſt her."‡

* Heb. x. 34.—xi. 37, &c. † 2 Cor. vi. 4, &c.
‡ Mat. xvi. 18.

III. 1. But

III. 1. But ſhall we not ſee greater things than theſe? Yea, greater than have been yet from the beginning of the world. Can Satan cauſe the truth of God to fail, or his promiſes to be of none effect? If not, the time will come, when Chriſtianity will prevail over all, and cover the earth. Let us ſtand a little, and ſurvey (the third thing which was propoſed) this ſtrange ſight, a *Chriſtian world*. "Of this the Prophets of old enquired and ſearched diligently: * of this the ſpirit which was in them teſtified, It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, that the mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills, and all nations ſhall flow unto it. And they ſhall beat their ſwords into plough-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks. Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation; neither ſhall they learn war any more. † In that day there ſhall be a Root of Jeſſe, which ſhall ſtand for an Enſign of the people. To it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, and his reſt ſhall be glorious. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the Lord ſhall ſet his hand again to recover the remnant of his people; and he ſhall ſet up an Enſign for the nations, and ſhall aſſemble the outcaſts of Iſrael, and gather together the diſperſed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. § The wolf ſhall then dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child ſhall lead them. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy, ſaith the Lord, in all my holy mountain. For the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea." ‖

2. To the ſame effect are the words of the great Apoſtle, which it is evident have never yet been fulfilled. "Hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. But through their fall ſalvation is come to the Gentiles. And if the diminiſhing of them be

* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, &c. † Iſa. ii. 2, 4. § Iſa. xi. 10, 11, 12. ‖ Iſa. xi. 6.——9.

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the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulneſs? For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, That blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in: and ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved." *

3. Suppoſe now the fulneſs of time to be come, and the prophecies to be accompliſhed, What a proſpect is this? All is *peace, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever.* Here is no din of arms, no *confuſed noiſe*, no *garments rolled in blood.* *Deſtructions are come to a perpetual end:* wars are ceaſed from the earth. Neither are there any inteſtine jars remaining; no brother riſing up againſt brother; no country or city divided againſt itſelf, and tearing out its own bowels. Civil diſcord is at an end for evermore, and none is left either to deſtroy or hurt his neighbour. Here is no oppreſſion to *make* even *the wiſe man mad*; no extortion to *grind the face of the poor*; no robbery or wrong; no rapine or injuſtice; for all are *content with ſuch things as they poſſeſs.* Thus *righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other*; † they have *taken root and filled the land:* righteouſneſs flouriſhing out of the earth, and *peace looking down from heaven.*

4. And with righteouſneſs or juſtice, mercy is alſo found. The earth is no longer full of cruel habitations. The Lord hath deſtroyed both the blood-thirſty and malicious, the envious and revengeful man. Were there any provocation, there is none that now knoweth to return evil for evil: but indeed there is none doth evil, no not one; for all are harmleſs as doves. And being filled with peace and joy in believing, and united in one body, by one ſpirit, they all love as brethren, they are all of one heart, and of one ſoul. "Neither ſaith any of them, that ought of the things which he poſſeſſeth is his own." There is none among them that lacketh; for every man loveth his neighbour as himſelf.

* Rom. xi. 1, 11, 12, 25, 29. † Pſal. lxxxv. 10.

And

And all walk by one rule, "Whatever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them."

5. It follows, that no unkind word can ever be heard among them. No ſtrife of tongues, no contention of any kind, no railing or evil-ſpeaking; but every one "opens his mouth with wiſdom, and in his tongue there is the law of kindneſs." Equally incapable are they of fraud or guile: their love is without diſſimulation: their words are always the juſt expreſſion of their thoughts, opening a window into their breaſt, that whoſoever deſires may look into their hearts, and ſee that only love and God are there.

6. Thus, where "the Lord Omnipotent taketh to himſelf his mighty power and reigneth, doth he ſubdue all things to himſelf;" cauſe every heart to overflow with love, and fill every mouth with praiſe. "Happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed are the people who have the Lord for their God.* Ariſe, ſhine (ſaith the Lord) for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. Thou haſt known that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty God of Jacob. I have made thy Officers peace, and thy Exacters righteouſneſs. Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy land, waſting nor deſtruction within thy borders; but thou ſhalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praiſe. Thy people are all righteous; they ſhall inherit the land for ever: the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The Sun ſhall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightneſs ſhall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting light, and thy God thy glory."†

IV. Having thus briefly conſidered *Chriſtianity*, as beginning, as going on, and as covering the earth,

* Pſal. cxliv. 15. † Iſa. lx. 1. 16.—19.

it

it remains only that I ſhould cloſe the whole with a plain practical Application.

1. And firſt, I would aſk, Where does this *Chriſtianity* now exiſt? Where, I pray, do the *Chriſtians* live? Which is the country, the inhabitants whereof are all thus filled with the Holy Ghoſt? Are all of one heart and of one ſoul? Cannot ſuffer one among them to lack any thing, but continually give to every man as he hath need? Who one and all have the love of God filling their hearts, and conſtraining them to love their neighbour as themſelves? Who have all "put on bowels of mercy, humbleneſs of mind, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering?" Who offend not in any kind, either by word or deed, againſt juſtice, mercy, or truth? But in every point do unto all men, as they would theſe ſhould do unto them. With what propriety can we term any a Chriſtian Country, which does not anſwer this deſcription? Why then, let us confeſs we have never yet ſeen a Chriſtian Country upon earth.

2. I beſeech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, if ye do account me a madman or a fool, yet *as a fool bear with me.* It is utterly needful that ſome one ſhould uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech towards you. It is more eſpecially needful at *this* time; for who knoweth but it is the *laſt?* Who knoweth how ſoon the righteous Judge may ſay, "I will no more be intreated for this people. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in this land, they ſhould but deliver their own ſouls." And who will uſe this plainneſs, if I do not? Therefore I, even I, will ſpeak. And I adjure you, by the living God, that ye ſteel not your breaſts againſt receiving a bleſſing at *my* hands. Do not ſay in your heart, *Non perſuadebis, etiamſi perſuaſeries:* or, in other words, Lord, thou ſhalt not *ſend, by whom thou wilt ſend.* Let me rather periſh in my blood, than be ſaved by this man!

3. Brethren,

3. Brethren, "I am perſuaded better things of you, tho' I thus ſpeak." Let me aſk you then, in tender love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs, Is this city a Chriſtian city? Is Chriſtianity, Scriptural Chriſtianity, found here? Are we, conſidered as a community of men, ſo *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, as to enjoy in our hearts, and ſhew forth in our lives, the genuine fruits of that ſpirit? Are all the Magiſtrates, all Heads and Governors of Colleges and Halls, and their reſpective Societies (not to ſpeak of the inhabitants of the town) "of one heart and one ſoul? Is the love of God ſhed abroad in our hearts?" Are our tempers the ſame that were in him? And are our lives agreeable thereto? Are we "holy as he which hath called us is holy, in all manner of converſation?"

I intreat you to obſerve, that here are no peculiar notions now under conſideration; that the queſtion moved is not concerning *doubtful opinions*, of one kind or another; (but concerning the undoubted, fundamental branches if there be any ſuch) of our common Chriſtianity. And for the deciſion thereof, I appeal to your own conſciences, guided by the word of God. He therefore that is not condemned by his own heart, let him go free.

5. In the fear then, and in the preſence of the great God, before whom both you and I ſhall ſhortly appear, I pray you, that are in authority over us, whom I reverence for your Office ſake, to conſider, (and not after the manner of diſſemblers with God) Are you "filled with the Holy Ghoſt?" Are you lively portraitures of him, whom ye are appointed to repreſent among men? *I have ſaid, Ye are God's*, ye Magiſtrates and Rulers; ye are by office ſo nearly allied to the God of heaven! In your ſeveral ſtations and degrees, ye are to ſhew forth unto us *the Lord our Governor*. Are all the thoughts of your hearts, all your tempers and deſires, ſuitable to your high calling? Are all your words like unto thoſe which come out of the

mouth

mouth of God? Is there, in all your actions, dignity and love? A greatneſs which words cannot expreſs, which can flow only from an heart full of God—and yet conſiſtent with the character of "Man that is a worm, and the ſon of man that is a worm!"

6. Ye venerable men, who are more eſpecially called to form the tender minds of youth, to diſpel thence the ſhades of ignorance and error, and train them up to be wiſe unto ſalvation, Are you *filled with the Holy Ghoſt?* With all theſe *fruits of the Spirit*, which your important office ſo indiſpenſibly requires? Is your heart whole with God? Full of love and zeal to ſet up his kingdom on earth? Do you continually remind thoſe under your care, that the one rational end of all our ſtudies, is to know, love, and ſerve "the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent?" Do you inculcate upon them, day by day, that love alone never faileth? (Whereas, whether there be tongues, they ſhall fail, or philoſophical knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away:) and that without love, all learning is but ſplendid ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of ſpirit. Has all you teach an actual tendency to the love of God, and of all mankind for his ſake? Have you an eye to this end in whatever you preſcribe, touching the kind, the manner, and the meaſure of their ſtudies; deſiring and labouring, that wherever the lot of theſe young ſoldiers of Chriſt is caſt, they may be ſo many "burning and ſhining lights, adorning the goſpel of Chriſt in all things?" And permit me to aſk, Do you put forth all your ſtrength in the vaſt work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your might? Exerting every faculty of your ſoul? Uſing every talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermoſt of your power?

7. Let it not be ſaid, that I ſpeak here, as if all under your care were intended to be Clergymen. Not ſo: I only ſpeak as if they were all intended

to

to be Chriſtians. But what example is ſet them by us who enjoy the beneficence of our forefathers? by Fellows, Students, Scholars; more eſpecially thoſe who are of ſome rank and eminence? Do ye, brethren, abound in the fruits of the Spirit, in lowlineſs of mind, in ſelf-denial and mortification, in ſeriouſneſs and compoſure of ſpirit, in patience, meekneſs, ſobriety, temperance; and in unwearied, reſtleſs endeavours, to do good, in every kind, unto all men; to relieve their outward wants, and to bring their ſouls to the true knowledge and love of God? Is this the general character of Fellows of Colleges? I fear it is not. Rather, have not pride and haughtineſs of ſpirit, impatience and peeviſhneſs, ſloth and indolence, gluttony and ſenſuality, and even a proverbial uſeleſſneſs, been objected to us, *perhaps* not always by our enemies, nor wholly without ground? O that God would roll away this reproach from us, that the very memory of it might periſh for ever!

8. Many of us are more immediately conſecrated to God, called to miniſter in holy things. Are we then patterns to the reſt, "in word, in converſation, in charity: in ſpirit, in faith, in purity?*" Is there written on our forehead and on our heart, "Holineſs to the Lord?" For what motives did we enter upon this office? Was it indeed with a ſingle eye "to ſerve God, truſting that we were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt, to take upon us this miniſtration, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" And have we "clearly determined, by God's grace, to give ourſelves wholly to this Office? Do we forſake and ſet aſide, as much as in us lies, all worldly cares and ſtudies? Do we apply ourſelves wholly to this one thing, and draw all our cares and ſtudies this way?" Are we apt to teach? Are we taught of God, that we may be able to teach others alſo? Do we know God? Do we know Jeſus Chriſt?

* 1 Tim. iv. 12.

Hath "God revealed his Son in us?" And hath he "made us able Miniſters of the new Covenant?" Where then are the "ſeals of our Apoſtleſhip?" Who that were dead in treſpaſſes and ſin, have been quickened by our word? Have we a burning zeal to ſave ſouls from death, ſo that for their ſake we often forget even to eat our bread? Do we ſpeak plain, "by manifeſtation of the truth, commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God?"* Are we dead to the world and the things of the world, "laying up all our treaſure in heaven?" Do we lord over God's heritage? Or are we the leaſt, the ſervants of all? When we bear the reproach of Chriſt does it ſit heavy upon us? Or do we rejoice therein? When we are ſmitten on the one cheek, Do we reſent it? Are we impatient of affronts? Or do we turn the other alſo; not reſiſting the evil, but overcoming evil with good? Have we a bitter zeal, inciting us to ſtrive ſharply and paſſionately with them that are out of the way? Or is our zeal the flame of love, ſo as to direct all our words with ſweetneſs, lowlineſs, and meekneſs of wiſdom?

9. Once more, What ſhall we ſay concerning the youth of this place? Have you either the form or the power of Chriſtian godlineſs? Are you humble, teachable, adviſeable: or ſtubborn, ſelf-willed, heady, and high-minded? Are you obedient to your ſuperiors as to parents? Or do you deſpiſe thoſe to whom you owe the tendereſt reverence? Are you diligent in your eaſy buſineſs, purſuing your ſtudies with all your ſtrength? Do you redeem the time, crowding as much work into every day as it can contain? Rather, are ye not conſcious to yourſelves, that you waſte away day after day, either in reading what has no tendency to Chriſtianity, or in gaming, or in—you know not what? Are you better managers of your fortune than of your time? Do you, out of principle,

* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

take

take care to owe no man any thing? Do you "remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy;" to ſpend it in the more immediate worſhip of God? When you are in his houſe, Do you conſider that God is there? Do you behave, "as ſeeing him that is inviſible?" Do you know how to "poſſeſs your bodies, in ſanctification and honour?" Are not drunkenneſs and uncleanneſs found among you? Yea, are there not a multitude of you who "glory in their ſhame?" Do not many of you "take the name of God in vain, perhaps habitually, without either remorſe or fear? Yea, are there not a multitude of you that are forſworn? I fear, a ſwiftly-increaſing multitude. Be not ſurpriſed, brethren. Before God and this congregation, I own myſelf to have been of the number; ſolemnly ſwearing to obſerve all thoſe cuſtoms, which I then knew nothing of; and thoſe ſtatutes, which I did not ſo much as read over, either then, or for ſome years after. What is perjury, if this is not? But if it be, O what a weight of ſin, yea, ſin of no common dye, lieth upon us! And doth not the Moſt High regard it?

10. May it not be one of the conſequences of this, that ſo many of you are a generation of triflers; triflers with God, with one another, and with your own ſouls? For how few of you ſpend from one week to another, a ſingle hour in private prayer? How few have any thought of God in the general tenor of your converſation? Who of you is, in any degree, acquainted with the work of his Spirit, his ſupernatural work in the ſouls of men? Can you bear, unleſs now and then, in a Church, any talk of the Holy Spirit? Would you not take it for granted, if one began ſuch a converſation, that it was either Hypocriſy, or Enthuſiaſm? In the name of the Lord God Almighty, I aſk, What Religion are you of? Even the talk of Chriſtianity, ye cannot, will not bear. O my brethren! What a

Chriſtian city is this? "It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand!"

11. For indeed, what probability, what poſſibility rather, (ſpeaking after the manner of men) is there that Chriſtianity, Scriptural Chriſtianity, ſhould be again the religion of this place? That all orders of men among us ſhould ſpeak and live as men, "filled with the Holy Spirit?" By whom ſhould this Chriſtianity be reſtored? By thoſe of you that are in authority? Are you convinced then that this is Scriptural Chriſtianity? Are you deſirous it ſhould be reſtored? And do ye not count your fortune, liberty, life, dear unto yourſelves, ſo ye may be inſtrumental in the reſtoring of it? But ſuppoſe ye have this deſire, who hath any power proportioned to the effect? Perhaps ſome of you have made a few faint attempts, but with how ſmall ſucceſs? Shall Chriſtianity then be reſtored by young, unknown, inconſiderable men? I know not whether ye yourſelves could ſuffer it. Would not ſome of you cry out, "Young man, in ſo doing thou reproacheſt us?" But there is no danger of your being put to the proof; ſo hath iniquity overſpread us like a flood. Whom then ſhall God ſend? The famine, the peſtilence, (the laſt Meſſengers of God to a guilty land) or the ſword? The armies of the Romiſh Aliens to reform us into our firſt love? Nay, "rather let us fall into thy hand, O Lord, and let us not fall into the hand of man."

Lord, ſave or we periſh? Take us out of the mire that we ſink not! O help us againſt theſe enemies! for vain is the help of man. Unto thee all things are poſſible. According to the greatneſs of thy power, preſerve thou thoſe that are appointed to die; and preſerve us in the manner that ſeemeſt to thee good; not as we will, but as thou wilt.

Juſtification by Faith,

A SERMON,

On Romans iv. 5.

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him "that juſtifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted "to him for Righteouſneſs."

1. HOW a ſinner may be juſtified before God, the Lord and Judge of all, is a queſtion of no common importance, to every child of man. It contains the foundation of all our hope; in as much as while we are at enmity with God, there can be no true peace, no ſolid joy, either in time or in eternity. What peace can there be, while our own heart condemns us? And much more, He that is "greater than our heart and knoweth all things?" What ſolid joy, either in this world or that to come, while "the wrath of God abideth on us?"

2. And yet how little hath this important queſtion been underſtood? What confuſed notions have many had concerning it? Indeed not only confuſed, but often utterly falſe; contrary to the truth, as light to darkneſs: notions abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Oracles of God, and with the whole analogy of Faith. And hence, erring concerning the very foundation, they could not poſſibly build thereon: at leaſt, not *gold, ſilver, or precious ſtones*, which would endure when tried as by fire; but only *hay and ſtubble*, neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to man.

3. In order to do juſtice, as far as in me lies, to the vaſt importance of the ſubject, to ſave thoſe that ſeek the truth in ſincerity, from *vain jangling and ſtrife of words*, to clear the confuſedneſs of thought, into which ſo many have already been led thereby, and to give them true and juſt conceptions

of this great myſtery of godlineſs, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew,

Firſt, What is the general ground of this whole Doctrine of Juſtification.

Secondly, What Juſtification is.

Thirdly, Who they are that are juſtified. And

Fourthly, On what Terms they are juſtified.

I. I am firſt, to ſhew, What is the general ground of this whole Doctrine of Juſtification.

1. In the image of God was man made only as he that created him is holy; merciful as the Author of all is merciful, perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. As God is love, ſo man dwelling in love, dwelt in God, and God in him. God made him to be an *image of his own eternity*, an incorruptible picture of the God of glory. He was accordingly pure, as God is pure, from every ſpot of ſin. He knew not evil in any kind or degree, but was inwardly and outwardly ſinleſs and undefiled. He "loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and ſoul, and ſtrength."

2. To man thus upright and perfect, God gave a perfect law, to which he required full and perfect obedience. He required full obedience in every point, and this to be performed without any intermiſſion, from the moment man became a living ſoul, till the time of his trial ſhould be ended. No allowance was made for any falling ſhort. As indeed there was no need of any; man being altogether equal to the taſk aſſigned, and thoroughly furniſhed for every good word and work.

3. To the entire law of love which was written in his heart (againſt which perhaps he could not ſin directly) it ſeemed good to the ſovereign wiſdom of God, to ſuperadd one poſitive law: "Thou ſhalt not eat of the fruit of the tree that groweth in the midſt of the garden," annexing that penalty thereto, "In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die."

4. Such

4. Such then was the ſtate of man in Paradiſe. By the free, unmerited love of God, he was holy and happy; he knew, loved, enjoyed God, which is (in ſubſtance) life everlaſting. And in this life of love, he was to continue for ever, if he continued to obey God in all things: but if he diſobeyed in any, he was to forfeit all. "In that day, ſaid God, thou ſhalt ſurely die."

5. Man did diſobey God. He "ate of the tree, of which God commanded him, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it." And in that day he was condemned, by the righteous judgment of God. Then alſo the ſentence whereof he was warned before, began to take place upon him. For the moment he taſted that fruit, he died: his ſoul died, was ſeparated from God; ſeparate from whom the ſoul has no more life, than the body has when ſeparate from the ſoul. His body likewiſe became corruptible and mortal; ſo that death then took hold on this alſo. And being already dead in the ſpirit, dead to God, dead in ſin, he haſtened on to death everlaſting; to the deſtruction both of body and ſoul, in the fire never to be quenched.

6. Thus, "by one man, ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin. And ſo death paſſed upon all men," as being contained in him who was the common Father and Repreſentative of us all. Thus "through the offence of one," all are dead, dead to God, dead in ſin, dwelling in a corruptible, mortal body, ſhortly to be diſſolved, and under the ſentence of death eternal. For as "by one man's diſobedience, all were made ſinners;" ſo by that offence of one, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation," Rom v. 12, &c.

7. In this ſtate we were, even all mankind, when "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not periſh but have everlaſting life." In the fulneſs of time, he was made man, another common Head of mankind, a ſecond general Parent and Repreſentative of the whole

whole human race. And as ſuch it was that "he bore our griefs, the Lord laying upon him the iniquities of us all." Then was he wounded for our tranſgreſſions and bruiſed for our iniquities. He made his ſoul an offering for ſin:" he poured out his blood for the tranſgreſſors: he "bore our ſins in his own body on the tree, that by his ſtripes we might be healed:" and by that one oblation of himſelf once offered, he hath redeemed me and all mankind; having thereby "made a full, perfect and ſufficient ſacrifice and ſatisfaction, for the ſins of the whole world."

8. In conſideration of this, that the Son of God hath "taſted death for every man," God hath now "reconciled the world to himſelf, not imputing to them their former treſpaſſes." And thus, "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification." So that for the ſake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and ſuffered for us, God now vouchſafes on only one condition (which himſelf alſo enables us to perform) both to remit the puniſhment due to our ſins, to reinſtate us in his favour, and to reſtore our dead ſouls to ſpiritual life, as the earneſt of life eternal.

9. This therefore is the general ground, of the whole doctrine of *Juſtification*. By the ſin of the firſt Adam, who was not only the Father, but likewiſe the Repreſentative of us all, we all fell ſhort of the favour of God: we all became children of wrath: or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, "Judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Even ſo, by the ſacrifice for ſin made by the Second Adam, as the Repreſentative of us all, God is ſo far reconciled to all the world, that he hath given them a new Covenant. The plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, "there is no more condemnation for us, but we are juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt."

II. 1. But what is it to be *juſtified?* What is *Juſtification?* This was the ſecond thing which I propoſed to ſhew. And it is evident from what has been already obſerved, that it is not, the being made actually juſt and righteous. This is *Sanctification*; which is indeed, in ſome degree, the immediate *Fruit* of Juſtification; but nevertheleſs is a diſtinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies, what God *does for us* through his Son: the other what he *works in us* by his Spirit. So that although ſome rare inſtances may be found, wherein the term *Juſtified* or *Juſtification*, is uſed in ſo wide a ſenſe as to include *Sanctification* alſo; yet in general uſe, they are ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from each other, both by St. Paul and the other inſpired Writers.

2. Neither is that far-fetched conceit, that juſtification is, the clearing us from accuſation, particularly that of Satan, eaſily proveable from any clear text of holy writ. In the whole ſcriptural account of this matter, as above laid down, neither that accuſer nor his accuſation appears to be at all taken in. It cannot indeed be denied, that he is the *Accuſer of men*, emphatically ſo called. But it does in nowiſe appear, that the great Apoſtle hath any reference to this, more or leſs, in all that he hath written touching Juſtification, either to the Romans or the Galatians.

3. It is alſo far eaſier to take for granted, than to prove from any clear Scripture-Teſtimony, that Juſtification is, the clearing us from the accuſation brought againſt us by *the Law*. At leaſt, if this forced, unnatural way of ſpeaking, mean either more or leſs than this, That whereas we have tranſgreſſed the Law of God, and thereby deſerved the damnation of hell, God does not inflict on thoſe who are juſtified, the puniſhment which they had deſerved.

4. Leaſt of all does Juſtification imply, that God is deceived in thoſe whom he juſtifies; that he thinks

them

them to be what in fact they are not, that he accounts them to be otherwiſe than they are. It does by no means imply, that God judges concerning us, contrary to the real nature of things: that he eſteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous, when we are unrighteous. Surely no. The judgment of the all-wiſe God, is always according to truth. Neither can it ever conſiſt with his unerring wiſdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, becauſe another is ſo. He can no more in this manner confound me with Chriſt, than with David or Abraham. Let any man to whom God hath given underſtanding, weigh this without prejudice: and he cannot but perceive, that ſuch a notion of Juſtification, is neither reconcileable to Reaſon or Scripture.

5. The plain ſcriptural notion of Juſtification is pardon, the forgiveneſs of ſins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby for the ſake of the Propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he "ſheweth forth his righteouſneſs (or mercy) by the remiſſion of the ſins that are paſt." This is the eaſy, natural account of it given by St. Paul, throughout this whole Epiſtle. So he explains it himſelf, more particularly in this, and in the following chapter. Thus in the next verſes but one to the text, "Bleſſed are they, ſaith he, whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered: bleſſed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute ſin." To him that is juſtified or forgiven, God *will not impute ſin* to his condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this world or in that which is to come. His ſins, all his paſt ſins, in thought, word and deed, are covered, are blotted out: ſhall not be remembered or mentioned againſt him, any more than if they had not been. God will not inflict on that ſinner what he deſerved to ſuffer, becauſe the Son of his love hath ſuffered for him. And from the time we are *accepted through the Beloved, reconciled to* God *through his blood*, he

he loves and bleſſes and watches over us for good, even as if we had never ſinned.

Indeed the Apoſtle in one place ſeems to extend the meaning of the word much farther; where he ſays, "Not the hearers of the Law, but the doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified." Here he appears to refer our Juſtification, to the ſentence of the great day. And ſo our Lord himſelf unqueſtionably doth, when he ſays, "By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified:" proving thereby, that for "every idle word men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account in the day of judgment." But perhaps we can hardly produce another inſtance, of St. Paul's uſing the word in that diſtant ſenſe. In the general tenor of his writings, it is evident he doth not. And leaſt of all in the text before us, which undeniably ſpeaks, not of thoſe who have already *finiſhed their courſe*, but of thoſe who are now juſt *ſetting out*, juſt *beginning to run the race which is ſet before them.*

III. 1. But this is the third thing which was to be conſidered, namely, who are they that are juſtified? And the Apoſtle tells us expreſsly, the ungodly: "He, that is, God, juſtifieth the ungodly:" the ungodly of every kind and degree, and none but the ungodly. As "they that are righteous need no repentance," ſo they need no forgiveneſs. It is only ſinners that have any occaſion for pardon: it is ſin alone which admits of being forgiven. Forgiveneſs therefore has an immediate reference to ſin, and (in this reſpect) to nothing elſe. It is our *unrighteouſneſs* to which the pardoning God is *merciful*: it is our *iniquity* which he *remembreth no more*

2. This ſeems not to be at all conſidered by thoſe who ſo vehemently contend, that a man muſt be ſanctified, that is, holy, before he can be juſtified: eſpecially by ſuch of them as affirm, that univerſal Holineſs or Obedience muſt precede Juſtification (unleſs they mean, that Juſtification at the laſt day, which is wholly out of the preſent queſtion)

tion) ſo far from it, that the very ſuppoſition, is not only flatly impoſſible (for where there is no love of God, there is no holineſs; and there is no love of God, but from a ſenſe of his loving us, but alſo groſsly, intrinſically abſurd, contradictory to itſelf. For it is not a *Saint* but a *Sinner* that is forgiven, and under the notion of a ſinner. God *juſtifieth* not the godly, but the *ungodly*; not thoſe that are holy already, but the unholy. Upon what condition he doth this, will be conſidered quickly: but whatever it is, it cannot be holineſs. To aſſert this, is to ſay, the Lamb of God takes away, only thoſe ſins which were taken away before.

3. Does then the good Shepherd ſeek and ſave only thoſe that are found already? No. He ſeeks and ſaves that which is loſt. He pardons thoſe who need his pardoning mercy. He ſaves from the guilt of ſin (and at the ſame time from the power) ſinners of every kind, of every degree: men who till then were altogether ungodly; in whom the love of the Father was not; and conſequently, in whom dwelt no good thing, no good or truly Chriſtian temper: but all ſuch as were evil and abominable, pride, anger, love of the world, the genuine fruits of that *carnal mind* which *enmity againſt God.*

4. Theſe who are ſick, the burden of whoſe ſins is intolerable, are they that need a Phyſician; theſe who are guilty, who groan under the wrath of God, are they that need a pardon. Theſe who are *condemned already*, not only by God, but alſo by their own conſcience, as by a thouſand witneſſes, of all their ungodlineſs, both in thought and word and work, cry aloud for him that *juſtifieth the ungodly, through the redemption that is in Jeſus: the ungodly and him that worketh not*; that worketh not before he is juſtified; any thing that is good, that is truly virtuous or holy, but only evil continually. For his heart is neceſſarily, eſſentially

evil,

evil till the love of God is ſhed abroad therein. And while the tree is corrupt, ſo are the fruits; "for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

5. If it be objected, "Nay, but a man, before he is juſtified, may feed the hungry, or clothe the naked; and theſe are good works:" the anſwer is eaſy. He may do thoſe, even before he is juſtified. And theſe are, in one ſenſe, *good works*; they are *good and unprofitable to men*. But it does not follow, that they are, ſtrictly ſpeaking, good in themſelves, or good in the ſight of God. All truly *good works* (to uſe the words of our Church) *follow after Juſtification*. And they are therefore good and *acceptable to God in Chriſt*, becauſe they *ſpring out of a true and living faith*. By a parity of Reaſon, all *works done before Juſtification, are not* good, in the Chriſtian ſenſe, *foraſmuch as they ſpring not of faith in Jeſus Chriſt* (though often from ſome kind of faith in God they may ſpring) "yea, rather, for they are not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not (how ſtrange ſoever it may appear to ſome) but they have the nature of ſin."

6. Perhaps thoſe who doubt of this, have not duly conſidered the weighty reaſon which is here aſſigned, why no works done before Juſtification, can be truly and properly good. The Argument plainly runs thus:

No Works are good which are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:

But no Works done before Juſtification are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:

Therefore no Works done before Juſtification are good.

The firſt Propoſition is ſelf-evident. And the ſecond, That no Works done before Juſtification, are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, will appear equally plain and undeniable, if we only conſider God hath willed and

commanded, that *all our works* ſhould *be done in charity*, (ἐν ἀγαπῃ) in love, in that love to God which produces love to all mankind. But none of our works can be done in this love, while the love of the Father (of God as our Father) is not in us. And this love cannot be in us, till we receive the "Spirit of Adoption, crying in our hearts, Abba, Father." If therefore God doth not *juſtify the ungodly*, and him that (in this ſenſe) *worketh not*, then hath Chriſt died in vain; then notwithſtanding his death, can no fleſh living be juſtified.

IV. 1. But on what terms then is he juſtified, who is altogether *ungodly*, and till that time, *worketh not?* On one alone, which is Faith, He "believeth in him that juſtifieth the ungodly." And "he that believeth is not condemned: yea, he is paſſed from death unto life." "For the righteouſneſs (or mercy) of God is by Faith of Jeſus Chriſt, unto all and upon all them that believe:—whom God hath ſent forth for a Propitiation, through faith in his blood: that he might be juſt, and (conſiſtently with his juſtice) the Juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus: therefore we conclude, that a man is juſtified by Faith, without the deeds of the law:" without previous obedience to the Moral Law, which indeed he could not till now perform. That it is the Moral Law, and that alone which is here intended, appears evidently from the words that follow. "Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid! Yea, we eſtabliſh the Law." What Law do we eſtabliſh by Faith? Not the Ritual Law: not the Ceremonial Law of Moſes. In no wiſe; but the great unchangeable law of Love, the holy love of God and of our neighbour.

2. Faith in general is, a divine, ſupernatural ἔλεγχος, evidence or conviction *of things not ſeen*, nor diſcoverable by our bodily ſenſes, as being either paſt, future, or ſpiritual. Juſtifying faith implies, not only a divine evidence or conviction,

that

that "God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf," but a ſure truſt and confidence, that Chriſt died for my ſins, that he loved *me* and gave himſelf for *me*. And at what time ſoever a ſinner thus believes, be it in early childhood, in the ſtrength of his years, or when he is old and hoary-haired, God juſtifieth that ungodly one: God for the ſake of his Son, pardoneth and abſolveth him, who had in him till then no good thing. Repentance indeed God hath given him before; but that repentance was neither more nor leſs, than a deep ſenſe of the want of all good, and the preſence of all evil. And whatever good he hath or doth from that hour, when he firſt believes in God through Chriſt, Faith does not *find*, but *bring*. This is the fruit of Faith. Firſt the tree is good, and then the fruit is good alſo.

3. I cannot deſcribe the nature of this Faith better, than in the words of our own Church. "The only inſtrument of ſalvation" (whereof Juſtification is one branch) "is Faith: that is, a ſure truſt and confidence, that God both hath and will forgive our ſins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, for the merits of Chriſt's death and paſſion.—But here we muſt take heed that we do not halt with God, through an inconſtant, wavering Faith. Peter coming to Chriſt upon the water, becauſe he fainted in Faith, was in danger of drowning. So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared, that we ſhould ſink as Peter did, not into the water, but into the bottomleſs pit of hell-fire." Second Sermon on the Paſſion.

"Therefore have a ſure and conſtant Faith, not only that the death of Chriſt is available for all the world, but that he hath made a full and ſufficient ſacrifice for *thee*, a perfect cleanſing of *thy* ſins, ſo that thou mayeſt ſay with the Apoſtle, he loved *thee* and gave himſelf for *thee*. For this is to make Chriſt *thine own*, and to apply his merits unto *thyſelf*." Sermon on the Sacrament, firſt Part.

4. By affirming that this Faith is the term or *Condition of Juſtification*, I mean, firſt, that there is no Juſtification without it. "He that believeth not is condemned already;" and ſo long as he believeth not, that condemnation cannot be removed, but *the wrath of* God *abideth on him.* As "there is no other name given under heaven than that of Jeſus of Nazareth," no other merit *whereby* a condemned ſinner can ever *be ſaved* from the guilt of ſin; ſo there is no other way of obtaining a ſhare of his merit, than *by Faith in his name.* So that as long as we are without this Faith, we are "ſtrangers to the Covenant of promiſe, we are aliens from the common-wealth of Iſrael, and without God in the world." Whatſoever virtues (ſo called) a man may have, I ſpeak of thoſe unto whom the goſpel is preached; for "what have I to do to judge them that are without?" Whatſoever good works (ſo accounted) he may do, it profiteth not; he is ſtill a *child of wrath*, ſtill under the curſe, till he believes in Jeſus.

5. Faith therefore is the *neceſſary* condition of Juſtification. Yea, and the *only neceſſary* condition thereof. This is the ſecond point carefully to be obſerved; that the very moment God giveth Faith *(for it is the gift of* God) to the *ungodly, that worketh not*, that *Faith is counted to him for righteouſneſs.* He hath no righteouſneſs at all, antecedent to this, not ſo much as negative righteouſneſs or innocence. But *Faith is imputed to him for righteouſneſs*, the very moment that he believeth. Not that God (as was obſerved before) thinketh him to be, what he is not. But as *he made Chriſt to be a ſin-offering for us*, that is, treated him as a ſinner, puniſhed him for our ſins, ſo he counteth us righteous, from the time we believe in him: that is, he doth not puniſh us for our ſins, yea, treats us as though we were guiltleſs and righteous.

6. Surely

6. Surely the difficulty of aſſenting to the propoſition, That Faith is the *only condition* of Juſtification, muſt ariſe from not underſtanding it. We mean thereby thus much, That it is the only thing without which no one is juſtified; the only thing that is immediately, indiſpenſably, abſolutely requiſite in order to pardon. As on the one hand, though a man ſhould have every thing elſe, without Faith, yet he cannot be juſtified; ſo on the other, though he be ſuppoſed to want every thing elſe, yet if he hath Faith, he cannot but be juſtified. For ſuppoſe a ſinner of any kind or degree, in a full ſenſe of his total ungodlineſs, of his utter inability to think, ſpeak, or do good, and his abſolute meetneſs for hell-fire: ſuppoſe, I ſay, this ſinner, helpleſs and hopeleſs, caſts himſelf wholly on the mercy of God in Chriſt (which indeed he cannot do but by the grace of God) who can doubt, but he is forgiven in that moment? Who will affirm, that any more is *indiſpenſably required*, before that ſinner can be juſtified?

Now if there ever was one ſuch inſtance from the beginning of the world. (And have there not been, and are there not ten thouſand times ten thouſand?) it plainly follows, that Faith is, in the above ſenſe, the ſole condition of Juſtification.

7. It does not become poor, guilty, ſinful worms, who receive whatſoever bleſſings they enjoy, (from the leaſt drop of water that cools our tongue, to the immenſe riches of glory in eternity) of grace, of mere favour, and not of debt, to aſk of God the reaſons of his conduct. It is not meet for us to call him in queſtion, "who giveth account to none of his ways;" to demand, Why didſt thou make Faith the condition, the only condition of Juſtification? Wherefore didſt thou decree, *He that believeth*, and he only, *ſhall be ſaved?* This is the very point on which St. Paul ſo ſtrongly inſiſts in the ninth chapter of his Epiſtle, viz. That

the terms of pardon and acceptance muſt depend, not on us, but *on him that calleth us:* that there is no *unrighteouſneſs with* God, in fixing his own terms, not acccording to ours, but his own good pleaſure: who may juſtly ſay, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," namely, on him who believeth in Jeſus. *So then it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth,* to cauſe the condition on which he ſhall find acceptance; *but of God that ſheweth mercy,* that accepteth none at all, but of his own free love, his unmerited goodneſs. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy,* viz. on thoſe who believe on the Son of his love: *and whom he will,* that is, thoſe who believe not, *he hardeneth,* leaves at laſt to the hardneſs of their hearts.

8. One reaſon, however, we may humbly conceive, of God's fixing this condition of Juſtification, "if thou believeſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt thou ſhalt be ſaved," was to *hide pride from man.* Pride had already deſtroyed the Angels of God, had caſt down *a third part of the ſtars of heaven.* It was likewiſe in great meaſure owing to this, when the Tempter ſaid, *Ye ſhall be as Gods,* that Adam fell from his own ſtedfaſtneſs, and brought ſin and death into the world. It was therefore an inſtance of wiſdom worthy of God, to appoint ſuch a condition of reconciliation, for him and all his poſterity, as might effectually humble, might abaſe them to the duſt. And ſuch is Faith. It is peculiarly fitted for this end. For he that cometh unto God by this Faith, muſt fix his eye ſingly on his own wickedneſs, on his guilt and helpleſſneſs, without having the leaſt regard to any ſuppoſed good in himſelf to any virtue or righteouſneſs whatſoever. He muſt come as a *mere ſinner* inwardly and outwardly, ſelf-deſtroyed and ſelf-condemned, bringing nothing to God but ungodlineſs only, pleading nothing of his own but ſin and miſery.

miſery. Thus it is, and thus alone, when his *mouth is ſtopped*, and he ſtands utterly *guilty before* God, that he can *look unto Jeſus*, as the whole and ſole *Propitiation for his ſins*. Thus only can he be *found in him*, and receive the *righteouſneſs which is of God* by *Faith*.

9 Thou ungodly one, who heareſt or readeſt theſe words, thou vile, helpleſs, miſerable ſinner, I charge thee before God the Judge of all, go ſtrait unto him, with all thy ungodlineſs Take heed thou deſtroy not thine own ſoul by pleading thy righteouſneſs, more or leſs. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, loſt, deſtroyed, deſerving and dropping into hell: and thou ſhalt then find favour in his ſight, and know that he juſtifieth the ungodly. As ſuch thou ſhalt be brought unto the *blood of ſprinkling*, as an undone, helpleſs, damned ſinner. Thus *look unto Jeſus!* There is *the Lamb of God*, who *taketh away* thy *ſins!* Plead thou no works, no righteouſneſs of thine own! No humility, contrition, ſincerity. In no wiſe. That were, in very deed, to deny the Lord that bought thee. No. Plead thou ſingly, the blood of the Covenant, the ranſom paid for thy proud, ſtubborn, ſinful ſoul. Who art thou, that now ſeeſt and feeleſt both thine inward and outward ungodlineſs? Thou art the man! I want thee for my Lord. I challenge *thee* for a child of God by Faith. The Lord hath need of thee. Thou who feeleſt thou art juſt fit for hell, art juſt fit to advance his glory: the glory of his free grace, juſtifying the ungodly and him that worketh not. O come quickly! Believe in the Lord Jeſus: and thou, even thou art reconciled to God.

The Righteouſneſs of Faith,
A SERMON.

ROMANS X. 5, 6, 7, 8.

" Moſes deſcribeth the Righteouſneſs which is of
" the Law. That the man which doeth thoſe
" Things ſhall live by them.
" But the Righteouſneſs which is of Faith ſpeaketh
" on this wiſe; Say not in thine heart, Who
" ſhall aſcend into Heaven? that is, to bring
" Chriſt down from above:
" Or, Who ſhall deſcend into the Deep? that is, to
" bring up Chriſt again from the Dead.
" But what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, even
" in thy mouth and in thy heart: that is the
" Word of Faith, which we preach."

1. THE Apoſtle does not here oppoſe the Covenant given by Moſes, to the Covenant given by Chriſt. If we ever imagined this, it was for want of obſerving, that the latter, as well as the former part of theſe words, were ſpoken by Moſes himſelf, to the people of Iſrael, and that, concerning the Covenant which then was. (Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 14.) But it is the Covenant of Grace, which God through Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed with men in all ages, (as well before and under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, as ſince God was manifeſt in the fleſh) which St. Paul here oppoſes to the Covenant of Works, made with Adam while in paradiſe; but commonly ſuppoſed to be the only Covenant which God had made with man, particularly by thoſe Jews of whom the Apoſtle writes.

2. Of theſe it was that he ſo affectionately ſpeaks, in the beginning of this chapter. " My heart's

heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they may be ſaved. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs" (of the Juſtification that flows from his mere grace and mercy, freely forgiving our ſins through the Son of his love, through the redemption which is in Jeſus) " and ſeeking to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs," (their own holineſs, antecedent to Faith in *him that juſtifieth the ungodly*, as the ground of their pardon and acceptance) " have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God," and conſequently ſeek death in the error of their life.

3. They were ignorant, that " Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to ever one that believeth;" that by the oblation of himſelf once offered, he had put an end to the firſt Law or Covenant (which indeed was not given by God to Moſes, but to Adam in his ſtate of innocence) the ſtrict tenor whereof, without any abatement was; " Do this and live:" and at the ſame time purchaſed for us that better Covenant, " Believe and live:" Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved; now ſaved both from the guilt and power of ſin, and, of conſequence, from the wages of it.

4. And how many are equally ignorant now, even among thoſe who are called by the name of Chriſt? How many who have now a *zeal for God*, yet have it not *according to knowledge:* but are ſtill *ſeeking to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs*, as the ground of their pardon and acceptance; and therefore vehemently refuſe to *ſubmit themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God?* Surely my heart's deſire, and prayer to God for you, brethren, is, that ye may be ſaved. And in order to remove this grand ſtumbling-block out of your way, I will endeavour to ſhew, Firſt, What the *righteouſneſs* is, *which is of the Law*, and what *the righteouſneſs which is of Faith:* Secondly, The folly of truſting in *the*

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righteouſneſs of the law, and the wiſdom of *ſubmitting to that which is of Faith.*

I. 1. And, firſt, "The righteouſneſs which is of the law, ſaith, The man which doth theſe things, ſhall live by them." Conſtantly and perfectly obſerve all theſe things to do them, and then thou ſhalt live for ever. This Law or Covenant (uſually called, The Covenant of works) given by God to man in paradiſe, required an obedience, perfect in all its parts, entire and wanting nothing, as the condition of eternal continuance in the holineſs and happineſs wherein he was created.

2. It required, That man ſhould fulfil all righteouſneſs, inward and outward, negative and poſitive: That he ſhould not only abſtain from every idle word, and avoid every evil work, but ſhould keep every affection, every deſire, every thought in obedience to the will of God. That he ſhould continue holy, as he which had created him was holy, both in heart and in all manner of converſation; that he ſhould be pure in heart, even as God is pure; perfect as his Father in heaven was perfect: That he ſhould love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his ſoul, with all his mind, and with all his ſtrength: that he ſhould love every ſoul which God had made, even as God had loved him: that by this univerſal benevolence, he ſhould dwell in God (who is love) and God in him: that he ſhould ſerve the Lord his God with all his ſtrength, and in all things ſingly aim at his glory.

3. Theſe were the things which the righteouſneſs of the law required, that he who did them might live thereby. But it farther required, That this entire obedience to God, this inward and outward holineſs, this conformity both of heart and life to his will, ſhould be perfect in *degree*. No abatement, no allowance could poſſibly be made, for falling ſhort in any degree, as to any jot or tittle either

either of the outward or the inward law. If every commandment relating to outward things was obeyed, yet that was not ſufficient, unleſs every one was obeyed with all the ſtrength, in the higheſt meaſure, and moſt perfect manner. Nor did it anſwer the demand of this Covenant, to love God with every power and faculty, unleſs he were loved with the full capacity of each, with the whole poſſibility of the ſoul.

4. One thing more was indiſpenſably required by the righteouſneſs of the law, namely, that this univerſal obedience, this perfect holineſs both of heart and life, ſhould be perfectly uninterrupted alſo, ſhould continue without any intermiſſion, from the moment wherein God created man, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, until the days of his trial ſhould be ended, and he ſhould be confirmed in life everlaſting.

5. The righteouſneſs then which is of the Law, ſpeaketh on this wiſe: "Thou, O man of God, ſtand faſt in love, in the image of God, wherein thou art made. If thou wilt remain in life, keep the commandments, which are now written in thy heart. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Love as thyſelf every ſoul that he hath made. Deſire nothing but God. Aim at God in every thought, in every word and work. Swerve not in one motion of body or ſoul, from him thy mark and the prize of thy high calling. And let all that is in thee praiſe his holy name, every power and faculty of thy ſoul, in every kind, in every degree, and at every moment of thine exiſtence. *This do, and thou ſhalt live*: thy light ſhall ſhine, thy love ſhall flame more and more, till thou art received up into the houſe of God in the heavens, to reign with him for ever and ever."

6. "But the righteouſneſs which is of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe: ſay not in thine heart, who ſhall aſcend into heaven, that is, to bring down Chriſt from above" (as tho' it were ſome impoſſible

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taſk, which God required thee previouſly to perform in order to thine acceptance:) "Or, who ſhall deſcend into the deep, that is, to bring up Chriſt from the dead;" (as tho' that were ſtill remaining to be done, for the ſake of which thou wert to be accepted.) "But what ſaith it? The word," (according to the tenor of which, thou mayeſt now be accepted as an heir of life eternal) "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of Faith, which we preach:" the new covenant which God hath now eſtabliſhed with ſinful man, through Chriſt Jeſus.

7. *By the righteouſneſs which is of Faith*, is meant that condition of Juſtification (and in conſequence of preſent and final ſalvation, if we endure therein unto the end) which was given by God to *fallen man*, through the merits and mediation of his only begotten Son. This was in part revealed to Adam ſoon after his fall, being contained in the original promiſe, made to him and his ſeed, concerning the ſeed of the woman, who ſhould *bruiſe the Serpent's head*.* It was a little more clearly revealed to Abraham, by the Angel of God from heaven, ſaying, †"By myſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord, that in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed." It was yet more fully made known to Moſes, to David, and to the Prophets that followed: and through them, to many of the people of God, in their reſpective generations. But ſtill the bulk even of theſe were ignorant of it; and very few underſtood it clearly. Still *life and immortality* were not ſo *brought to light* to the Jews of old, as they are now unto us *by the goſpel*.

8. Now this covenant ſaith not to ſinful man "Perform unſinning obedience and live." If this were the term, he would have no more benefit by all which Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for him, than if he was required, in order to life, to *aſcend*

* Gen. iii. 15. † Gen. xxii. 15, 18.

into

into heaven and bring down Chriſt from above; or to *deſcend into the deep*, into the inviſible world, and *bring up Chriſt from the dead*. It doth not require any impoſſibility to be done (altho' to mere man, what it requires would be impoſſible; but not, to man aſſiſted by the Spirit of God:) this were only, to mock human weakneſs. Indeed, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the covenant of *Grace* doth not require us, to *do* any thing at all, as abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary in order to our juſtification: but only, to *believe* in him, who, for the ſake of his Son, and the propitiation which he hath made, *juſtifieth the ungodly that worketh not*, and imputes his faith to him for righteouſneſs. Even ſo "Abraham believed in the Lord § and he counted it to him for righteouſneſs. † And he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of faith—that he might be the father of all them that believe—that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo. * Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it, [i. e. Faith] was imputed to him. But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed," to whom Faith ſhall be imputed for righteouſneſs, ſhall ſtand in the ſtead of perfect obedience, in order to our acceptance with God, "if we believe on him who raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered [to death] for our offences, and was raiſed again for our Juſtification:" "For the aſſurance of the remiſſion of our ſins, and of a ſecond life to come, to them that believe."

9. What ſaith then the covenant of forgiveneſs, of unmerited love, of pardoning mercy? "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved." In the day thou believeſt, thou ſhalt ſurely live. Thou ſhalt be reſtored to the favour of God; and in his pleaſure is life. Thou ſhalt be ſaved from the curſe and from the wrath of God. Thou ſhalt be quickened from the death of ſin, into the life of righteouſneſs. And if thou endure to the end,

§ Gen. xv. 6. † Rom. iv. 11. * Ver. 23, 24, 25.

believing in Jeſus, thou ſhalt never taſte the ſecond death, but having ſuffered with thy Lord, ſhalt alſo live and reign with him for ever and ever.

10. Now *this word is nigh thee.* This condition of life, is plain, eaſy, always at hand. *It is in thy mouth and in thy heart*, through the operation of the Spirit of God. The moment *thou believeſt in thine heart* in him, whom God *hath raiſed from the dead*, and *confeſſeth with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus*, as *thy* Lord and *thy* God, *thou ſhalt be ſaved* from condemnation, from the guilt and puniſhment of thy *former* ſins, and ſhalt have power to ſerve God in true holineſs, all the *remaining* days of thy life.

11. What is the difference then between the *righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, and the *righteouſneſs which is of Faith?* Between the firſt Covenant, or the Covenant of works, and the ſecond, the Covenant of grace? The eſſential, unchangeable difference is this: the one ſuppoſes him to whom it is given, to be already holy and happy, created in the image and enjoying the favour of God; and preſcribes the condition whereon we may continue therein, in love and joy, life and immortality. The other ſuppoſes him to whom it is given, to be now unholy and unhappy; fallen ſhort of the glorious image of God, having the wrath of God abiding on him, and haſtening through ſin, whereby his ſoul is dead, to bodily death, and death everlaſting. And to man in this ſtate, it preſcribes the condition, whereon he may regain the pearl he has loſt: may recover the favour, and the image of God, may retrieve the life of God in his ſoul, and be reſtored to the knowledge and the love of God, which is the beginning of life eternal.

12. Again, the Covenant of works, in order to man's *continuance* in the favour of God, in his knowledge and love, in holineſs and happineſs, required of perfect man, a *perfect* and uninterrupted

obedience,

obedience, to every point of the law of God. Whereas the Covenant of grace, in order to man's *recovery*, of the favour and life of God, requires only *faith*; living faith in him who through God juſtifies him that *obeyed not*.

13. Yet again. The Covenant of works required of Adam and all his children, to *pay the price themſelves*, in conſideration of which, they were to receive all the future bleſſings of God. But in the Covenant of grace, ſeeing we have nothing to pay, God *frankly forgives us all*: provided only, that we believe in him, who hath *paid the price for us*; who hath given himſelf a *propitiation for our ſins, for the ſins of the whole world*.

14. Thus the firſt Covenant required what is now *afar off* from all the children of men; namely, unſinning obedience, which is far from thoſe who are *conceived and born in ſin*. Whereas the ſecond requires what is nigh at hand; as though it ſhould ſay, Thou art ſin! God is love. Thou by ſin art fallen ſhort of the glory of God; yet there is mercy with him. Bring then all thy ſins to the pardoning God, and they ſhall vaniſh away as a cloud. If thou wert not ungodly, there would be no room for him to juſtify thee as ungodly. But now draw near, in full aſſurance of faith. He ſpeaketh, and it is done. Fear not, only believe; for even the juſt God *juſtifieth all that believe in Jeſus*.

II. 1. Theſe things conſidered, it will be eaſy to ſhew, as I propoſed to do in the ſecond place, the folly of truſting in the *righteouſneſs of the Law*, and the wiſdom of *ſubmitting to the righteouſneſs which is of Faith*.

The folly of thoſe who ſtill truſt, in the *righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, the terms of which are, Do this and live, may abundantly appear from hence. They ſet out wrong. Their very firſt ſtep is a fundamental miſtake. For before they can

ever think of claiming any bleſſing on the terms of this Covenant, they muſt ſuppoſe themſelves to be in his ſtate, with whom this Covenant was made. But how vain a ſuppoſition is this? Since it was made with Adam in a ſtate of innocence. How weak therefore muſt that whole building be, which ſtands on ſuch a foundation? And how fooliſh are they who thus build on the ſand? Who ſeem never to have conſidered, that the Covenant of works was not given to man, when he was dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, but when he was alive to God, when he knew no ſin, but was holy as God is holy: who forget, that it was never deſigned for the *recovery* of the favour and life of God once loſt, but only for the *continuance* and increaſe thereof, till it ſhould be compleat in life everlaſting.

2. Neither do they conſider, who are thus *ſeeking to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, what manner of obedience or righteouſneſs that is, which the Law indiſpenſably requires. It muſt be perfect and entire, in every point, or it anſwers not the demand of the Law. But which of you is able to perform ſuch obedience? Or, conſequently to live thereby? Who among you fulfils every jot and tittle even of the outward commandments of God? Doing nothing, great or ſmall, which God forbids? Leaving nothing undone which he enjoins? Speaking no *idle words*? Having your converſation always *meet to miniſter grace to the hearers*? And *whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do*, doing *all to the glory of* God? And how much leſs are you able to fulfil all the inward commandments of God? Thoſe which require, that every temper and motion of your ſoul ſhould be holineſs unto the Lord? Are you able, To *love* God *with all your heart*? To love all mankind as your own ſoul? To *pray without ceaſing*? *In every thing to give thanks*? To have God always

before

before you? And to keep every affection, deſire and thought, in obedience to his Law?

3. You ſhould farther conſider, That the righteouſneſs of the Law requires, not only the obeying every command of God, negative and poſitive, internal and external, but likewiſe in the perfect degree. In every inſtance whatever, the voice of the Law is, Thou ſhalt ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy ſtrength. It allows no abatement of any kind. It excuſes no defect. It condemns every coming ſhort of the full meaſure of obedience, and immediately pronounces a curſe on the offender. It regards only the invariable rules of Juſtice, and ſaith, "I know not to ſhew mercy."

4. Who then can appear before ſuch a Judge, which is *extreme to mark what is done amiſs?* How weak are they who deſire to be tried at the bar, where *no fleſh living can be juſtified?* None of the offspring of Adam. For ſuppoſe we did now keep every commandment with all our ſtrength; yet one ſingle breach which ever was, utterly deſtroys our whole claim to life. If we have ever offended in any one point, this righteouſneſs is at an end. For the Law condemns all who do not perform uninterrupted as well as perfect obedience. So that according to the ſentence of this, for him who hath once ſinned, in any degree, *there remaineth only a fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries of* God.

5. Is it not then the very fooliſhneſs of folly, for fallen man to ſeek life by this righteouſneſs? For man, who was "ſhapen in wickedneſs, and in ſin did his mother conceive him:" man, who is by nature all *earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh*, altogether *corrupt and abomiable:* in whom, till he find grace, *dwelleth no good thing*; nay, who cannot of himſelf think one good thought? Who is indeed all ſin, a mere lump of ungodlineſs, and who commits ſin in every breath he draws; whoſe actual tranſgreſſions, in word and deed, are more in num-

ber than the hairs of his head! What ſtupidity, what ſenſeleſſneſs muſt it be for ſuch an unclean, guilty, helpleſs worm as this, to dream of ſeeking acceptance by *his own righteouſneſs*, of living by *the righteouſneſs* which *is of the Law*?

6. Now whatſoever conſiderations prove the folly of truſting in the *righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, prove equally the wiſdom of ſubmitting to *the righteouſneſs which is of* God by *Faith*. This were eaſy to be ſhewn with regard to each of the preceding conſiderations. But to wave this, the wiſdom of the firſt ſtep hereto, the diſclaiming our own righteouſneſs, plainly appears from hence, That it is acting according to truth, to the real nature of things. For what is it more, than to acknowledge with our heart as well as lips, the true ſtate wherein we are? To acknowledge, that we bring with us into the world, a corrupt, ſinful nature; more corrupt indeed than we can eaſily conceive or find words to expreſs? That hereby we are prone to all that is evil, and averſe from all that is good; that we are full of pride, ſelf-will, unruly paſſions, fooliſh deſires, vile and inordinate affections; lovers of the world, lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God? That our lives have been no better than our hearts, but many ways ungodly and unholy; inſomuch that our actual ſins, both in word and deed, have been as the ſtars of heaven for multitude: that on all theſe accounts, we are unpleaſing to him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and deſerve nothing from him, but indignation and wrath and death, the due wages of ſin? That we cannot by any of our righteouſneſs, (for indeed, we have none at all) nor by any of our works (for they are as the tree from which they grow) appeaſe the wrath of God, or avert the puniſhment we have juſtly deſerved; yea, that, if left to ourſelves, we ſhall only wax worſe and worſe, ſink deeper and deeper into ſin, offend God more and more both with our evil works,

and

and with the evil tempers of our carnal mind, till we fill up the meaſure of our iniquities, and bring upon ourſelves ſwift deſtruction? And is not this the very ſtate wherein by nature we are? To acknowledge this then, both with our heart and lips, that is, to diſclaim our righteouſneſs, *the righteouſneſs which is of the Law*, is to act according to the real nature of things, and conſequently is an inſtance of true wiſdom.

7. The wiſdom of ſubmitting to *the righteouſneſs of Faith*, appears farther from this conſideration. That it is the righteouſneſs of God: I mean here, It is that method of reconciliation with God, which hath been choſe and eſtabliſhed by God himſelf, not only as he is the God of wiſdom, but as he is the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and of every creature which he hath made. Now as it is not meet for man to ſay unto God, what doſt thou? As none who is not utterly void of underſtanding, will contend with one that is mightier than he, with him whoſe kingdom ruleth over all; ſo it is true wiſdom, it is a mark of ſound underſtanding, to acquieſce in whatever he hath choſen, to ſay in this, as in all things, "It is the Lord: Let him do what ſeemeth him good."

8. It may be farther conſidered, That it was of mere grace, of free love, of undeſerved mercy, that God hath vouchſafed to ſinful man, any way of reconciliation with himſelf, that we were not cut away from his hand, and utterly blotted out of his remembrance. Therefore whatever method he is pleaſed to appoint, of his tender mercy, of his unmerited goodneſs, whereby his enemies, who have ſo deeply revolted from him, ſo long and obſtinately rebelled againſt him, may ſtill find favour in his ſight, it is doubtleſs our wiſdom to accept with all thankfulneſs.

9. To mention but one conſideration more. It is wiſdom to aim at the beſt end by the beſt means. Now the beſt end which any creature can purſue,

is happineſs in God. And the beſt end a fallen creature can purſue is, The recovery of the favour and image of God. But the beſt, indeed the only means under heaven given to man, whereby he may regain the favour of God, which is better than life itſelf, or the image of God which is the true life of the ſoul, is the ſubmitting to the *righteouſneſs which is of Faith*, the believing in the only begotten Son of God.

III. 1. Whoſoever therefore thou art who deſireſt to be forgiven and reconciled to the favour of God; do not ſay in thy heart, "I muſt *firſt do this*; I muſt *firſt* conquer every ſin; break off every evil word and work, and do all good to all men: or, I muſt *firſt* go to Church, receive the Lord's ſupper, hear more ſermons, and ſay more prayers." Alas, my brother, thou art clean gone out of the way. Thou art ſtill *ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God*, and art *ſeeking* to *eſtabliſh thy own righteouſneſs*, as the ground of thy reconciliation. Knoweſt thou not, that thou canſt do nothing but ſin, till thou art reconciled to God? Wherefore then doſt thou ſay, I *muſt do this* and this *firſt*, and then I ſhall believe. Nay, but *Firſt Believe*. Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Propitiation for thy ſins. Let this good foundation *firſt* be laid, and then thou ſhalt do all things well.

2. Neither ſay in thy heart, "I cannot be accepted yet, becauſe I am not *good enough*." Who is *good enough?* Who ever was? To merit acceptance at God's hands! Was ever any child of Adam *good enough* for this? Or, will any, till the conſummation of all things? And as for thee, thou art not good at all: there dwelleth in thee no good thing. And thou never wilt be, till thou believe in Jeſus. Rather thou wilt find thyſelf worſe and worſe. But is there any need of being worſe, in order to be accepted? Art thou not *bad enough* already? Indeed thou art, and that

God

God knoweth. And thou thyſelf canſt not deny it. Then delay not. All things are now ready. *Ariſe and waſh away thy ſins.* The fountain is open. Now is the time, to waſh thee white in the blood of the Lamb. Now he ſhall *purge* thee as *with hyſſop, and* thou *ſhalt be clean; he* ſhall *waſh* thee, and thou *ſhalt be whiter than ſnow.*

3. Do not ſay, "But I am not *contrite enough: I am not ſenſible enough* of my ſins." I know it. I would to God, thou wert more *ſenſible* of them, more *contrite* a thouſand fold than thou art. But do not ſtay for this. It may be God will make thee ſo, not before thou believeſt, but by believing. It may be, thou wilt not weep much, till thou loveſt much, becauſe thou haſt had much forgiven. In the mean time, look unto Jeſus. Behold how he loveth thee! What could he have done more for thee which he hath not done?

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine!"

Look ſteadily upon him, till he looks on thee, and breaks thy hard heart. Then ſhall thy *head* be *waters, and* thy *eyes fountains of tears.*

4. Nor yet do thou ſay, "I muſt *do* ſomething more, *before* I come to Chriſt." I grant, ſuppoſing thy Lord ſhould delay his coming, it were meet and right to wait for his appearing, in doing ſo far as thou haſt power, whatſoever he hath commanded thee. But there is no neceſſity for making ſuch a ſuppoſition. How knoweſt thou that he will delay? Perhaps he will appear, as the day-ſpring from on high, before the morning-light. O do not ſet him a time. Expect him every hour. Now, he is nigh! Even at the door!

5. And to what end wouldſt thou wait for *more ſincerity, before* thy ſins are blotted out? To make thee more worthy of the grace of God? Alas, thou art ſtill *eſtabliſhing thy own righteouſneſs.* He will have mercy, not becauſe thou art worthy

of

of it, but becauſe his compaſſions fail not: nor becauſe thou art righteous; but becauſe Jeſus Chriſt hath atoned for thy ſins.

Again, if there be any thing good in *ſincerity*, why doſt thou expect it *before* thou haſt Faith? Seeing Faith itſelf is the only root of whatever is really good and holy.

Above all, How long wilt thou forget, That whatſoever thou doſt, or whatſoever thou haſt, before thy ſins are forgiven thee, it avails nothing with God, toward the procuring of thy forgiveneſs? Yea, and that it muſt all be caſt behind thy back, trampled under foot, made no account of, or thou wilt never find favour in God's ſight; becauſe until then thou canſt not aſk it, as a mere ſinner, guilty, loſt, undone, having nothing to plead, nothing to offer to God, but only the merits of his well beloved Son, *who loved* thee, *and gave himſelf for* thee.

6. To conclude. Whoſoever thou art, O man, who haſt the ſentence of death in thyſelf, who feeleſt thyſelf a condemned ſinner, and haſt the wrath of God abiding on thee: unto thee ſaith the Lord, Not, Do this: perfectly obey all my commands and live: but, "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved." *The word of Faith is nigh unto thee*; now, at this inſtant, in the preſent moment, and in thy preſent ſtate, ſinner as thou art, juſt as thou art, Believe the goſpel: and *I will be merciful unto* thy *unrighteouſneſs and* thy *iniquities will I remember no more.*

The

The Way to the Kingdom,
A SERMON.

MARK I. 15.

"The Kingdom of GOD is at hand: repent ye, "and believe the Goſpel."

THESE words naturally lead us to conſider, Firſt, The Nature of True Religion, here termed by our Lord, *The Kingdom of God*, which, ſaith he, *is at hand*: And ſecondly, The way thereto, which he points out in thoſe words, *Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.*

I. 1. We are Firſt, to conſider, The Nature of True Religion, here termed by our Lord, *The Kingdon of God.* The ſame expreſſion the great Apoſtle uſes in his Epiſtle to the Romans, where he likewiſe explains his Lord's words, ſaying, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt," chap. xiv. 17.

2. *The kingdom of God*, or True Religion, *is not meat and drink.* It is well known, that not only the unconverted Jews, but great numbers of thoſe who had received the Faith of Chriſt, were notwithſtanding *zealous of the Law*, (Acts xxi. 20.) even the Ceremonial Law of Moſes. Whatſoever therefore they found written therein, either concerning meat and drink-offerings, or the diſtinction between clean and unclean meats, they not only obſerved themſelves but vehemently preſſed the ſame, even on thoſe *among the Gentiles* (or Heathens) *who were turned to God.* Yea, to ſuch

a degree, that ſome of them taught, whereſoever they came among them, *Except ye be circumciſed, and keep the Law*, (the whole Ritual Law) *ye cannot be ſaved*, Acts. xv. 1. 24.

3. In oppoſition to theſe, the Apoſtle declares, both here and in many other places, That True Religion does not conſiſt in *meat* and *drink*, or in any Ritual obſervances: nor indeed in any outward thing whatever, in any thing exterior to the heart; the whole ſubſtance thereof lying in *righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

4. Not in any *outward thing*; ſuch as *Forms* or *Ceremonies*, even of the moſt excellent kind. Suppoſing theſe to be ever ſo decent and ſignificant, ever ſo expreſſive of inward things: ſuppoſing them ever ſo helpful, not only to the vulgar, whoſe thought reaches little farther than their ſight; but even to men of underſtanding, men of ſtronger capacities, as doubtleſs they may ſometimes be: yea, ſuppoſing them, as in the caſe of the Jews, to be appointed by God himſelf; yet even during the period of time wherein that appointment remains in force, True Religion does not principally conſiſt therein; nay, ſtrictly ſpeaking, not at all. How much more muſt this hold concerning ſuch Rights and Forms, as are only of human appointment? The Religion of Chriſt riſes infinitely higher, and lies immenſely deeper than all theſe. Theſe are good in their places; juſt ſo far as they are in fact ſubſervient to true Religion. And it were ſuperſtition to object againſt them, while they are applied only as occaſional helps to human weakneſs. But let no man carry them further. Let no man dream, that they have any intrinſic worth; or that religion cannot ſubſiſt without them. This were to make them an abomination to the Lord.

5. The nature of Religion is ſo far from conſiſting in theſe, in *Forms* of worſhip, or *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, that it does not properly conſiſt in any

outward

outward actions, of what kind ſoever. It is true, a man cannot have any Religion, who is guilty of vicious, immoral actions; or who does to others, what he would not they ſhould do to him, if he were in the ſame circumſtance. And it is alſo true, that he can have no real Religion, who *knows to do good, and does it not.* Yet may a man both abſtain from outward evil, and do good, and ſtill have no religion. Yea, two perſons may do the ſame outward work; ſuppoſe, feeding the hungry or clothing the naked: and, in the mean time, one of theſe may be truly religious, and the other have no religion at all: for the one may act from the love of God, and the other from the love of praiſe. So manifeſt it is; that although true religion naturally leads to every good word and work, yet the real nature thereof lies deeper ſtill, even in *the hidden man of the heart.*

6. I ſay of *the heart.* For neither does Religion conſiſt in *Orthodoxy* or *right Opinions*; which altho' they are not properly outward things, are not in the heart, but the underſtanding. A man may be orthodox in every point; he may not only eſpouſe right Opinions, but zealouſly defend them againſt all oppoſers: he may think juſtly concerning the incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever bleſſed Trinity, and every other doctrine, contained in the Oracles of God: he may aſſent to all the three Creeds; that called the Apoſtles, the *Nicene*, and the *Athanaſian*: and yet it is poſſible, he may have no Religion at all, no more than a Jew, Turk, or Pagan. He may be almoſt as orthodox as —— the Devil; (though indeed not altogether. For every man errs in ſomething; whereas we cannot well conceive him to hold any erroneous opinion) and may all the while be as great a ſtranger as he to the religion of the heart.

7. This alone is Religion, truly ſo called: this alone is in the ſight of God of great price. The Apoſtle ſums it all up in three particulars, *righ-*

teouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. And firſt, *righteouſneſs.* We cannot be at a loſs concerning this, if we remember the words of our Lord deſcribing the two grand branches thereof, on which *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy * ſtrength. This is the firſt and great commandment," the firſt and great branch of Chriſtian righteouſneſs. Thou ſhalt delight thyſelf in the Lord thy God; thou ſhalt ſeek and find all happineſs in him. He ſhall be *thy ſhield and exceeding great reward,* in time and eternity. All thy bones ſhall ſay, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I deſire beſide thee!" Thou ſhalt hear, and fulfil his word who ſaith, "My ſon, give me thy heart." And having given him thy heart, thy inmoſt ſoul, to reign there without a rival, thou mayeſt well cry out, in the fulneſs of thy heart, "I will love thee O Lord, my ſtrength. The Lord is my ſtrong Rock, and my defence; my Saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will truſt; my buckler, the horn alſo of my ſalvation, and my refuge."

8. And the Second Commandment is like unto this; the ſecond great branch of Chriſtian righteouſneſs is cloſely and inſeparably connected therewith, even "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." Thou ſhalt love—Thou ſhalt embrace with the moſt tender good-will, the moſt earneſt and cordial affection, the moſt enflamed deſires of preventing or removing all evil, and of procuring for him every poſſible good—*Thy neighbour*—that is, not only thy friend, thy kinſman, or thy acquaintance; not only the virtuous, the friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy kindneſs; but every child of man, every human creature, every ſoul which God hath made: not excepting him whom thou had never ſeen in the fleſh, whom

* Mark xiii. 30.

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thou knoweſt not either by face or name: not excepting him whom thou knoweſt to be evil and unthankful, him that ſtill deſpitefully uſes and perſecutes thee. Him thou ſhalt *love as thyſelf*; with the ſame invariable thirſt after his happineſs in every kind; the ſame unwearied care to ſkreen him from whatever might grieve or hurt either his ſoul or body.

9. Now is not this love *The fulfilling of the Law?* The ſum of all Chriſtian righteouſneſs? Of all inward righteouſneſs; for it neceſſarily implies *bowels of mercies, humbleneſs of mind* (ſeeing *love is not puffed up*) *gentleneſs, meekneſs, long-ſuffering*, (for love *is not provoked* but *believeth, hopeth, endureth all things*) and of all outward righteouſneſs; for *love worketh no evil to his neighbour*, either by word or deed. It cannot willingly either hurt or grieve any one. And it is zealous of good works. Every lover of mankind, as he hath opportunity, *doth good unto all men*, being *(without partiality and without hypocriſy) full of mercy and good fruits.*

10. But true Religion, or a heart right toward God and man, implies happineſs as well as holineſs. For it is not only *righteouſneſs*, but alſo *peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* What peace? *The peace of* God, which God only can give and the world cannot take away: the peace which *paſſeth all underſtanding*, all (barely) rational conception; being a ſupernatural ſenſation, a divine taſte of *the powers of the world to come:* ſuch as the natural man knoweth not, how wiſe ſoever in the things of this world: nor indeed can he know it, in his preſent ſtate, *becauſe it is ſpiritually diſcerned.* It is a peace that baniſhes all doubt, all painful uncertainty; the Spirit of God *bearing witneſs with the ſpirit* of a Chriſtian, that he is *a child of* God. And it baniſhes fear, all ſuch fear as hath torment the fear of the wrath of God, the fear of hell, the fear of the Devil, and in particular, the fear of

Death: he that hath the peace of God, *deſiring* (if it were the will of God) *to depart and to be with God.*

11. With this peace of God, wherever it is fixed in the ſoul, there is alſo *joy in the Holy Ghoſt:* joy wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt, by the ever bleſſed Spirit of God. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble rejoicing in God, through Chriſt Jeſus, *by whom we have now received the Atonement,* καταλλαγήν, the reconciliation with God; and that enables us boldly to confirm the truth of the royal Pſalmiſt's declaration, "Bleſſed is the man (or rather happy) אשרי איש, whoſe unrighteouſneſs is forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered." He it is that inſpires the Chriſtian ſoul, with that even, ſolid joy, which ariſes from the teſtimony of the Spirit, that he is a child of God: and that gives him to *rejoice with joy unſpeakable, in hope of the glory of God*: hope both of the glorious image of God, which is in part and ſhall be fully *revealed in him*; and of that crown of Glory, which fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for him.

12. This holineſs and happineſs joined in one, are ſometimes ſtiled in the inſpired Writings, *the kingdom of God,* (as by our Lord in the text) and ſometimes, *The kingdom of heaven.* It is termed *the kingdom of God,* becauſe it is the immediate fruit of God's reigning in the ſoul. So ſoon as ever he takes unto himſelf his mighty power, and ſets up his throne in our hearts, they are inſtantly filled with this *righteouſneſs and peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* It is called *the kingdom of heaven,* becauſe it is (in a degree) heaven opened in the ſoul. For whoſoever they are that experience this, they can aver before angels and men,

Everlaſting life is won:
Glory is on earth begun:

According to the conſtant tenor of Scripture, which every where bears record, God *hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath*

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the Son (reigning in his heart) *hath life*, (even life everlaſting) 1 John v. 11, 12, *For this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*, John xvii. 3. And they to whom it is given, may confidently addreſs God, though they were in the midſt of a fiery furnace,

"Thee—Lord, ſafe ſhielded by thy power,
Thee, Son of God, JEHOVAH, we adore;
In form of man deſcending to appear:
To thee be ceaſeleſs hallelujah's given.
Praiſe, as in heaven thy throne, we offer here;
For where thy preſence is diſplay'd, is heaven."

13. And *this kingdom of God*, or of heaven, *is at hand*. As theſe words were originally ſpoken, they implied, that *the time* was then *fulfilled*, God being *made manifeſt in the fleſh*, when he would ſet up his kingdom among men, and reign in the hearts of his people. And is not the time now fulfilled? For *lo!* ſaith he, *I am with you always*, you who preach remiſſion of ſins in my name, *even unto the end of the world*. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Whereſoever therefore the goſpel of Chriſt is preached, this his *kingdom is nigh at hand*. It is not far from every one of you. Ye may this hour enter thereinto, if ſo be ye hearken to his voice, "Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel."

II. 1. This is the way. Walk ye in it. And firſt, Repent, that is, Know yourſelves. This is the firſt Repentance, previous to Faith: even conviction, or ſelf-knowledge. Awake then thou that ſleepeſt. Know thyſelf to be a ſinner, and what manner of ſinner thou art. Know that corruption of thy inmoſt nature, whereby thou art very far gone from original righteouſneſs, whereby *the fleſh luſteth* always *contrary to the Spirit*, through that *carnal mind which is enmity againſt God*, which *is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*. Know that thou art corrupted in every power,

in every faculty of thy ſoul; that thou art totally corrupted in every one of theſe, all the foundations being out of courſe. The eyes of thine underſtanding are darkened, ſo that they cannot diſcern God or the things of God. The clouds of ignorance and error reſt upon thee, and cover thee with the ſhadow of death. Thou knoweſt nothing yet, as thou oughteſt to know, neither God, nor the world, nor thyſelf. Thy will is no longer the will of God, but is utterly perverſe and diſtorted, averſe from all good, from all which God loves, and prone to all evil, to every abomination which God hateth. Thy affections are alienated from God, and ſcattered abroad over all the earth. All thy paſſions, both thy deſires and averſions, thy joys and ſorrows, thy hopes and fears, are out of frame, are either undue in their degree, or placed on undue objects. So that there is no ſoundneſs in thy ſoul; but *from the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot* (to uſe the ſtrong expreſſion of the Prophet) there are only *wounds and bruiſes and putrifying ſores.*

2. Such is the inbred corruption of thy heart, of thy very inmoſt nature. And what manner of branches canſt thou expect to grow, from ſuch an evil root? Hence ſprings unbelief, ever departing from the living God: ſaying, "Who is the Lord that I ſhould ſerve him? Tuſh! Thou God, careſt not for it." Hence independence, affecting to be like the Moſt High; hence pride in all its forms, teaching thee to ſay, "I am rich, and increaſed in goods, and have need of nothing." From this evil foundtain flow forth the bitter ſtreams of vanity, thirſt of praiſe; ambition, covetouſneſs; the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. From this ariſe anger, hatred, malice, revenge, envy, jealouſy, evil ſurmiſings: from this all the fooliſh and hurtful luſts, that now *pierce thee through with many ſorrows*, and if not timely prevented,

prevented, will at length *drown thy ſoul in everlaſting perdition.*

3. And what fruits can grow on ſuch branches as theſe? Only ſuch as are bitter and evil continually. Of pride cometh contention, vain boaſting, ſeeking and receiving praiſe of men, and ſo robbing God of that glory which he cannot give unto another. Of the luſt of the fleſh come gluttony or drunkenneſs, luxury or ſenſuality: fornication, uncleanneſs, variouſly defiling that body, which was deſigned for a temple of the Holy Ghoſt: of unbelief, every evil word and work. But the time would fail, ſhouldſt thou reckon up all; all the idle words thou haſt ſpoken, provoking the Moſt High, grieving the holy One of Iſrael: all the evil works thou haſt done, either wholly evil in themſelves, or at leaſt, not done to the glory of God. For thy actual ſins are more than thou art able to expreſs, more than the hairs of thy head. Who can number the ſands of the ſea, or the drops of rain, or thy iniquities?

4. And knoweſt thou not that "the wages of ſin is death?" Death not only temporal, but eternal. "The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die:" for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it. It ſhall die the ſecond death. This is the ſentence, to *be puniſhed* with never-ending death, "with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Knoweſt thou not that every ſinner, ἔνοχός ἐςι τῇ γεέννῃ τῦ πυρός; not properly *is in danger of hell-fire*, that expreſſion is far too weak: but rather, *is under the ſentence of hell-fire*, doomed already, juſt dragging to execution. Thou art guilty of everlaſting death. It is the juſt reward of thy inward and outward wickedneſs. It is juſt, that the ſentence ſhould now take place. Doſt thou ſee, doſt thou feel this? Art thou thoroughly convinced, that thou deſerveſt God's wrath and everlaſting damnation? Would God do thee any wrong, if he commanded

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the earth to open and ſwallow thee up? If thou wert now to go down quick into the pit, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched? If God hath given thee truly to repent, thou haſt a deep ſenſe that theſe things are ſo; and that it is of his mere mercy thou art not conſumed, ſwept away from the face of the earth.

5. And what wilt thou do to appeaſe the wrath of God, to atone for all thy ſins, and eſcape the puniſhment thou haſt ſo juſtly deſerved? Alas, thou canſt do nothing: nothing that will in any wiſe make amends to God, for one evil work, or word or thought. If thou couldſt now do all things well, if from this very hour, till thy ſoul ſhould return to God, thou couldſt perform perfect uninterrupted obedience, even this would not atone for what is paſt. The not increaſing thy debt would not diſcharge it. It would ſtill remain as great as ever. Yea, the preſent and the future obedience of all the men upon earth, and all the angels in heaven, would never make ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God for one ſingle ſin. How vain then was the thought, of atoning for thy own ſins by any thing thou couldſt do? It coſteth far more to redeem one ſoul, than all mankind is able to pay. So that were there no other help for a guilty ſinner, without doubt he muſt have periſhed everlaſtingly.

6. But ſuppoſe perfect obedience for the time to come, could atone for the ſins that are paſt, this would profit nothing; for thou art not able to perform it; no, not in any one point. Begin now. Make the trial. Shake off that outward ſin that ſo eaſily beſetteth thee. Thou canſt not. How then wilt thou change thy life from all evil to all good? Indeed, it is impoſſible to be done, unleſs firſt thy heart be changed. For ſo long as the tree remains evil, it cannot bring forth good fruit. But art thou able to change thy own heart, from all ſin to all holineſs? To quicken a ſoul that is dead in ſin? Dead to God and alive only to the world? No

more

more than thou art able to quicken a dead body, to raiſe to life him that liveth in the grave. Yea, thou art not able to quicken thy ſoul in any degree, no more than to give any degree of life to the dead body. Thou canſt do nothing more or leſs, in this matter; thou art utterly without ſtrength. To be deeply ſenſible of this, how helpleſs thou art, as well as how guilty and how ſinful, this is that *Repentance not to be repented of*, which is the Forerunner of the kingdom of God.

7. If to this lively conviction of thy inward and outward ſins, of thy utter guiltineſs and helpleſſneſs, there be added ſuitable affections, ſorrow of heart, for having deſpiſed thy own mercies, remorſe and ſelf-condemnation, having the mouth ſtopped, ſhame, to lift up thine eyes to heaven; fear of the wrath of God abiding on thee, of his curſe hanging over thy head, and of the fiery indignation ready to devour thoſe who forget God, and obey not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: earneſt deſire to eſcape from that indignation, to ceaſe from evil and learn to do well: then I ſay unto thee in the name of the Lord, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." One ſtep more and thou ſhalt enter in. Thou doſt *repent*. Now, *Believe the Goſpel*.

8. *The Goſpel* (that is, good tidings, good news for guilty, helpleſs ſinners) in the largeſt ſenſe of the word, means, the whole Revelation made to man by Jeſus Chriſt: and ſometimes the whole account of what our Lord did and ſuffered, while he tabernacled among men. The ſubſtance of all is, "Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners." Or, "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not periſh, but have everlaſting life." Or, "he was bruiſed for our tranſgreſſions, he was wounded for our iniquities: the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed."

9. Believe this and the kingdom of God is thine. By faith thou attaineſt the promiſe. "He pardoneth

doneth and abſolveth all that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy goſpel." As ſoon as ever God hath ſpoken to thy heart, "Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee," his kingdom comes; thou haſt righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

10. Only beware thou do not deceive thy own ſoul, with regard to the nature of this Faith. It is not (as ſome have fondly conceived) a bare aſſent to the truth of the Bible, of the Articles of our Creed, or of all that is contained in the Old and New Teſtament. The Devils believe this, as well as I or thou? And yet they are Devils ſtill. But it is, over and above this, a ſure truſt in the mercy of God through Chriſt Jeſus. It is a confidence in a pardoning God. It is a divine evidence or conviction, that "God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, not imputing to them their former treſpaſſes:" and in particular, that the Son of God hath loved *me* and given himſelf for me: and that I, even I, am now reconciled to God by the blood of the croſs.

11. Doſt thou thus believe? Then the peace of God is in thy heart, and ſorrowing and ſighing flee away. Thou art no longer in doubt of the love of God: it is clear as the noon-day ſun. Thou cryeſt out, "My ſong ſhall be always of the loving kindneſs of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be telling of thy truth, from one generation to another." Thou art no longer afraid of hell, or death, or him that had once the power of death, the devil: no, nor painfully afraid of God himſelf; only thou haſt a tender, filial fear of offending him. Doſt thou believe? Then thy "ſoul doth magnify the Lord, and thy ſpirit rejoiceth in God thy Saviour." Thou rejoiceſt in that thou haſt "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins." Thou rejoiceſt in that "Spirit of Adoption, which crieth in thy heart, Abba, Father!" Thou rejoiceſt in a *hope full of immortality*,

tality, in reaching forth unto the *mark of the prize of thy high calling*; in an earneſt expectation of all the good things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

12. Doſt thou now believe? Then *the love of God* is now *ſhed abroad in thy heart*. Thou loveſt him, becauſe he firſt loved us. And becauſe thou loveſt God, thou loveſt thy brother alſo. And being filled with *love*, *peace*, *joy*, thou art alſo filled with *long-ſuffering*, *gentleneſs*, *fidelity*, *goodneſs*, *meekneſs*, *temperance*, and all the other fruits of the ſame Spirit: in a word, with whatever diſpoſitions are holy, are heavenly, or divine. For while thou *beholdeſt with open*, uncovered *face*, (the veil now being taken away) *the glory of the Lord*, his glorious love, and glorious image wherein thou waſt created, "thou art changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord."

13. This repentance, this faith, this peace, joy, love; this change from glory to glory, is what the wiſdom of the world has voted to be madneſs, mere enthuſiaſm, utter diſtraction. But thou, O man of God, regard them not: be thou moved by none of theſe things. Thou knoweſt in whom thou haſt believed. See that no man take thy crown. Whereunto thou haſt already attained hold faſt; and follow, till thou attain all the great and precious promiſes. And thou who haſt not yet known him, let not vain men make thee aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt. Be thou in nothing terrified by thoſe who ſpeak evil of the things which they know not. God will ſoon turn thy heavineſs into joy. O let not thy hands hang down. Yet a little longer, and he will take away thy fears, and give thee the ſpirit of a ſound mind. *He is nigh that juſtifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died*; *yea, rather that roſe again*; *who is even now on the right hand of God, making interceſſion for thee*. Now caſt thyſelf on the

Lamb of God, with all thy ſins, how many ſoever they be; and *an entrance ſhall* now *be miniſtered unto* thee, *into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt!*

The Firſt-Fruits of the Spirit,

A SERMON.

ROMANS VIII. 1.

"There is therefore now no Condemnation to "them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not "after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit."

1. BY *them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, St. Paul evidently means, Thoſe who truly believe in him: thoſe who *being juſtified by faith, have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* They who thus believe do no longer *walk after the fleſh*, no longer follow the motions of corrupt nature: but *after the Spirit:* both their thoughts, words and works, are under the direction of the bleſſed Spirit of God.

2. *There is therefore now no condemnation to* theſe. There is no condemnation to them from God: for he hath *juſtified* them *freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus.* He hath forgiven all their iniquities, and blotted out all their ſins. And there is no condemnation to them from within: for they "have received not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things which are freely given to them of God:"* "which Spirit beareth witneſs

* 1 Cor. ii. 12.

with

with their ſpirits, that they are the children of God." And to this is added,* "the teſtimony of their conſcience: that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, they have had their converſation in the world."

3. But becauſe this Scripture has been ſo frequently miſunderſtood, and that in ſo dangerous a manner, becauſe, ſuch multitudes of *unlearned and unſtable men*, (ἰο αμαθεις και ασηριχτοι, men untaught of God, and conſequently uneſtabliſhed in *the truth which is after godlineſs*) have *wreſted* it *to their own deſtruction*, I propoſe to ſhew as clearly as I can, Firſt, Who thoſe are "which are in Chriſt Jeſus, and walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit;" and Secondly, How *there is no condemnation to* theſe. I ſhall conclude with ſome practical inferences.

I. 1. Firſt I am to ſhew, Who thoſe are that *are in Chriſt Jeſus*. And are they not, Thoſe who believe in his name? Thoſe who are "found in him, not having their own righteouſneſs, but the righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith?" Theſe, who *have redemption through his blood*, are properly ſaid to be *in Him*. For *they dwell in Chriſt and Chriſt in them*. They are *joined unto the Lord in one ſpirit*. They are ingrafted into him as branches into the vine. They are united, as Members to their Head, in a manner which words cannot expreſs, nor could it before enter into their hearts to conceive.

2. Now "whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not; walketh not after the fleſh." The fleſh, in the uſual language of St. Paul, ſignifies corrupt nature. In this ſenſe, he uſes the word, writing to the Galatians. "The works of the fleſh are manifeſt," Gal. v. 19. And a little before, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt (or

* 2 Cor. i. 12.

deſire) of the fleſh," (v. 16.) To prove which, namely, that thoſe who *walk by the Spirit, do not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh*, he immediately adds, *For the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit; but the ſpirit luſteth againſt the fleſh (for theſe are contrary to each other) that ye may not do the things which ye would.* So the words are literally tranſlated, (ἵνα μὴ ἃ ἂν θέλητε, ταῦτα ποιῆτε.) Not, *So that ye cannot do the things that ye would*, as if the fleſh overcame the ſpirit: a tranſlation which hath not only nothing to do with the original text of the Apoſtle, but likewiſe makes his whole argument nothing worth, yea, aſſerts juſt the reverſe of what he is proving.

3. "They who are of Chriſt, who abide in him, have crucified the fleſh with its affections and luſts." They abſtain from all thoſe works of the fleſh; from *adultery and fornication*, from *uncleanneſs and laſciviouſneſs*; from *idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance*; from *emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſedition, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings:* from every deſign, and word, and work, to which the corruption of nature leads. Altho' they feel the root of bitterneſs in themſelves, yet are they endued with power from on high, to trample it continually under foot, ſo that it cannot *ſpring up to trouble them:* inſomuch that every freſh aſſault which they undergo, only gives them freſh occaſion of praiſe, of crying out, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord."

4. They now *walk after the Spirit*, both in their hearts and lives. They are taught of him to love God and their neighbour, with a love which is as "a well of water, ſpringing up into everlaſting life." And by him they are led into every holy deſire, into every divine and heavenly temper, till every thought which ariſes in their heart is holineſs unto the Lord.

5. They who *walk after the Spirit*, are alſo led by him, into all holineſs of converſation. Their

ſpeech

ſpeech is *always in grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt*, with the love and fear of God. "No corrupt communication comes out of their mouth, but only that which is good;" that which is *to the uſe of edifying*, which is *meet to miniſter grace to the hearers*. And herein likewiſe do they exerciſe themſelves day and night, to do only the things which pleaſe God: in all their outward behaviour to follow him, "who left us an example that we might tread in his ſteps:" in all their intercourſe with their neighbour to walk in juſtice, mercy and truth; and *whatſoever they do*, in every circumſtance of life, to *do all to the glory of God*.

6 Theſe are they who indeed *walk by the ſpirit*. Being filled with faith and with the Holy Ghoſt, they poſſeſs in their hearts, and ſhew forth in their lives, in the whole courſe of their words and actions, the genuine fruits of the Spirit of God, namely, "love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs, temperance," and whatſoever elſe is lovely or praiſe-worthy. They "adorn in all things the goſpel of God our Saviour;" and give full proof to all mankind, that they are indeed actuated by the ſame ſpirit, "which raiſed up Jeſus from the dead."

II. 1. I propoſed to ſhew, in the ſecond place, How "there is no condemnation to them, which are thus in Chriſt Jeſus, and thus walk, not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit."

And, firſt, To believers in Chriſt, walking thus, *there is no condemnation* on account of their paſt ſins. God condemneth them not for any of theſe; they are as tho' they had never been. They are caſt "as a ſtone into the depth of the ſea," and he remembereth them no more. God having "ſet forth his Son to be a propitiation for them, thro' faith in his blood, hath declared unto them, his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of the ſins that are paſt." He layeth therefore none of theſe

to their charge; their memorial is perished with them.

2. And there is no condemnation in their own breast; no sense of guilt, or dread of the wrath of God. They *have the witness in themselves*; they are conscious of their interest in the Blood of Sprinkling. "They have not received again the Spirit of Bondage unto fear," unto doubt and racking uncertainty; but they "have received the Spirit of Adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father." Thus being *justified by Faith, they have* the *peace* of God ruling in their hearts: flowing from a continual sense of his pardoning mercy, and "the answer of a good conscience toward God."

3. If it be said, but sometimes a believer in Christ, may lose his sight of the mercy of God; sometimes such darkness may fall upon him that he no longer sees Him that is invisible, no longer feels that witness in himself of his part in the atoning Blood; and then he is inwardly condemned, he hath again *the sentence of death in himself:* I answer, supposing it so to be, supposing him not to see the mercy of God, then he is not a believer: for faith implies light; the light of God shining upon the soul. So far therefore as any one loses this light, he for the time loses his faith. And no doubt a true believer in Christ, may lose the light of faith. And so far as this is lost, he may for a time fall again into condemnation. But this is not the case of them who now *are in Christ Jesus*, who now believe in his name. For so long as they believe and walk after the spirit, neither God condemns them nor their own heart.

4. They are not condemned, secondly, for any present sins, for now transgressing the commandments of God. For they do not transgress them: they do not "walk after the flesh but after the spirit." This is the continual proof of their *love of God, that they keep his commandments:* even as

St.

St. John bears witneſs, "whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin. For his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God:" he cannot, ſo long as that ſeed of God, that loving, holy faith remaineth in him. So long as *he keepeth himſelf* herein, "that wicked one toucheth him not." Now it is evident, he is not condemned for the ſins which he doth not commit at all. They therefore who are thus "led by the Spirit, are not under the law," (Gal. v. 18.) Not under the curſe or condemnation of it; for it condemns none but thoſe who break it. Thus, that law of God, "Thou ſhalt not ſteal," condemns none but thoſe who do ſteal. Thus, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," condemns thoſe only who do not keep it holy. But againſt the fruits of the Spirit, "there is no law;" (v. 23.) As the Apoſtle more largely declares, in thoſe memorable words of his former epiſtle to Timothy. *We know that the law is good, if a man uſe it lawfully; knowing this,* (if while he uſes the law of God, in order either to convince or direct, he knows and remembers this) ὅτι δικαίῳ νόμος οὐ κεῖται. (Not that the law is not made for a righteous man; but) *That the law does not lie againſt a righteous man:* it has no force againſt him, no power to condemn him) *but againſt the lawleſs and diſobedient, againſt the ungodly and ſinners, againſt the unholy and profane—according to the glorious goſpel, of the bleſſed God,* 1 Tim. i. 8, 9, 11.

5. They are not condemned thirdly, for inward ſin, even tho' it does now remain. That the corruption of nature does ſtill remain, even in thoſe who are the children of God by faith, that they have in them the ſeeds of pride and vanity, of anger, luſt and evil deſire, yea, ſin of every kind, is too plain to be denied, being matter of daily experience. And on this account it is, that St. Paul ſpeaking to thoſe, whom he had juſt before

witneſſed to be * *in Chriſt Jeſus* †, to have been *called of God into the fellowſhip* (or participation) *of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, yet declares, "Brethren, I could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal: even as unto babes in Chriſt," (1 Cor. iii. 1.) *Babes in Chriſt*—So we ſee they were *in Chriſt*; they were believers in a low degree. And yet how much of ſin remained in them? Of that "carnal mind, which is not ſubject to the law of God."

6. And yet, for all this, they are not condemned. Altho' they feel the fleſh, the evil nature in them, altho' they are more ſenſible day by day, that their "heart is deceitful and deſperately wicked:" yet ſo long as they do not yield thereto, ſo long as they give no place to the devil, ſo long as they maintain a continual war with all ſin, with pride, anger, deſire, ſo that the fleſh hath not dominion over them, but they ſtill *walk after the ſpirit:* there is "no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus." God is well-pleaſed with their ſincere, tho' imperfect obedience: and they "have confidence toward God, knowing they are his, by the ſpirit which he hath given them," 1 John iii. 24.

7. Nay, fourthly, altho' they are continually convinced of ſin cleaving to all they do; altho' they are conſcious of not fulfilling the perfect law, either in their thoughts, or words, or works; altho' they know they do not love the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and ſoul, and ſtrength; altho' they feel more or leſs of pride or ſelf-will, ſtealing in and mixing with their beſt duties; altho' even in their more immediate intercourſe with God, when they aſſemble themſelves with the great congregation, and when they pour out their ſouls in ſecret to him, who ſeeth all the thoughts and intents of the heart, they are continually aſhamed of their wandering thoughts, or of the deadneſs and dulneſs of their affections: yet

* 1 Cor. i. 2. † Ver. 9.

there

there is no condemnation to them still, either from God or from their own heart. The consideration of these manifold defects only gives them a deeper sense, That they have always need of the Blood of Sprinkling, which speaks for them in the ears of God, and that Advocate with the Father "who ever liveth, to make intercession for them." So far are these from driving them away from him, in whom they have believed, that they rather drive them the closer to him, whom they feel the want of every moment. And at the same time, the deeper sense they have of this want, the more earnest desire do they feel, and the more diligent they are, as they "have received the Lord Jesus, so to walk in him."

8. They are not condemned, fifthly, for *sins of infirmity*, as they are usually called. (Perhaps it were advisable rather to call them *infirmities*, that we may not seem to give any countenance to sin, or to extenuate it in any degree, by thus coupling it with infirmity. But if we must retain so ambiguous and dangerous an expression) by *sins of infirmity* I would mean, such involuntary failings, as the saying a thing we believe true, tho' in fact it prove to be false; or the hurting our neighbour, without knowing or designing it; perhaps when we designed to do him good. Tho' these are deviations from the holy and acceptable and perfect will of God, yet they are not properly sins, nor do they bring any guilt on the conscience of *them which are in Christ Jesus*. They separate not between God and them, neither intercept the light of his countenance; as being no ways inconsistent with their general character, of "walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

9. Lastly, *There is no condemnation* to them for any thing whatever, which it is not in their power to help; whether it be of an inward or outward nature, and whether it be doing something, or leaving something undone. For instance: the Lord's

Supper

Supper is to be adminiſtered. But you do not partake thereof. Why do you not? You are confined by ſickneſs. Therefore you cannot help omitting it: and for the ſame reaſon, you are not condemned. There is no guilt; becauſe there is no choice. As there "is a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not."

10. A believer indeed may ſometimes be *grieved*, becauſe he cannot do what his ſoul longs for. He may cry out, when he is detained from worſhipping God in the great congregation, "Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God. My ſoul is athirſt for God, yea, even for the living God: when ſhall I come to appear in the preſence of God?" He may earneſtly deſire, (only ſtill ſaying in his heart, not as I will, but as thou wilt) to "go again with the multitude and bring them forth into the houſe of God." But ſtill if he cannot go, he feels no condemnation, no guilt, no ſenſe of God's diſpleaſure: but can cheerfully yield up thoſe deſires, with "O my ſoul, put thy truſt in God. For I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of my countenance and my God."

11. It is more difficult to determine concerning thoſe which are uſually ſtilled, *ſins of ſurpriſe:* as when one who commonly in patience poſſeſſes his ſoul, on a ſudden and violent temptation, ſpeaks or acts in a manner not conſiſtent with the Royal Law, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." Perhaps it is not eaſy to fix a general rule, concerning tranſgreſſions of this nature. We cannot ſay, either that men are or that they are not condemned, for ſins of ſurpriſe in general. But it ſeems whenever a believer is by ſurpriſe overtaken in a fault, there is more or leſs condemnation, as there is more or leſs concurrence of his will. In proportion as a ſinful deſire or a word or action is more or leſs voluntary, ſo we may conceive, God is more or

leſs

less displeased, and there is more or less guilt upon the soul.

12. But if so, then there may be some sins of surprise, which bring much guilt and condemnation. For in some instances, our being surprised is owing to some wilful and culpable neglect; or to a sleepiness of soul which might have been prevented, or shaken off before the temptation came. A man may be previously warned either of God or man, that trials and danger are at hand: and yet may say in his heart, "A little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to rest." Now if such an one afterwards fall, tho' unawares, into the snare which he might have avoided; that he fell unawares is no excuse: he might have foreseen and have shunned the danger. The falling even by surprise, in such an instance as this, is, in effect, a wilful sin; and as such must expose the sinner to condemnation, both from God, and his own conscience.

14. On the other hand, there may be sudden assaults, either from the world, or the god of this world, and frequently from our own evil hearts, which we did not, and hardly could foresee. And by these even a believer, while weak in faith, may possibly be borne down, suppose into a degree of anger, or thinking evil of another, with scarce any concurrence of his will. Now in such a case, the jealous God would undoubtedly shew him that he had done foolishly. He would be convinced of having swerved from the perfect law, from the mind which was in Christ, and consequently *grieved* with a godly sorrow, and lovingly *ashamed* before God Yet need he not come into condemnation. God layeth not folly to his charge, but hath compassion upon him, "even as a father pitieth his own children." And his heart condemneth him not; in the midst of that sorrow and shame, he can still say, "I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord

Lord Jehovah is my ſtrength and my ſong; he is alſo become my ſalvation."

III. 1. It remains only, to draw ſome practical Inferences from the preceding conſiderations.

And, firſt, If there be "no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, and walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit," on account of their paſt ſin: then why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith? Tho' thy ſins were once more in number than the ſand, what is that to thee, now thou art in Chriſt Jeſus? "Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth: who is he that condemneth?" All the ſins thou haſt committed from thy youth up, until the hour when thou waſt *accepted in the beloved*, are driven away as chaff, are gone, are loſt, ſwallowed up, remembered no more. Thou art now *born of the ſpirit:* wilt thou be troubled or afraid of what is done before thou wert born? Away with thy fears! Thou art not called to fear; but to the "*ſpirit of love and of a ſound mind.*" Know thy calling. Rejoice in God thy Saviour, and give thanks to God thy Father through him.

2. Wilt thou ſay, "But I have again committed ſin, ſince I had redemption through his blood? And therefore it is, that *I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.*" It is meet thou ſhouldſt abhor thyſelf; and it is God who hath wrought thee to this ſelf-ſame thing. But doſt thou now believe? Hath he again enabled thee to ſay, "I know that my Redeemer liveth: and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God?" Then that faith again cancels all that is paſt, and there is no condemnation to thee. At whatſoever time thou truly believeſt in the name of the Son of God, all thy ſins antecedent to that hour, vaniſh away as the morning dew. Now then, "Stand thou faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made thee free." He hath once more made

thee

thee free from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt and punishment of it. O "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage!" Neither the vile devilish bondage of sin; or evil desires, evil tempers, or words or works, the most grievous yoke on this side hell: nor the bondage of slavish tormenting fear, of guilt and self-condemnation.

3. But, secondly: Do all they which abide "in Christ Jesus, walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit?" Then we cannot but infer, that whosoever now committeth sin, hath no part or lot in this matter. He is even now condemned by his own heart. But *if our heart condemn us*, if our own conscience beareth witness that we are guilty, undoubtedly God doth: for "he is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things;" so that we cannot deceive him, if we can ourselves. And think not to say, "I was justified once; my sins were once forgiven me." I know not that; neither will I dispute whether they were or no. Perhaps, at this distance of time, it is next to impossible to know with any tolerable degree of certainty, whether that was a true, genuine work of God, or whether thou didst only deceive thy own soul. But this I know with the utmost degree of certainty "he that committeth sin is of the devil." Therefore thou art of thy father the devil. It cannot be denied: for the works of thy father thou dost. O flatter not thyself with vain hopes. Say not to thy soul, Peace, peace! For there is no peace. Cry aloud! Cry unto God out of the deep; if haply he may hear thy voice. Come unto him as at first, as wretched and poor, as sinful, miserable, blind and naked. And beware thou suffer thy soul to take no rest, till his pardoning love be again revealed, till he *heal thy backslidings*, and fill thee again with the *faith that worketh by love*.

4. Thirdly, Is there no condemnation to them which *walk after the spirit*, by reason of *inward sin* still remaining, so long as they do not give way

thereto

thereto; nor by reaſon of *ſin cleaving* to all they do? Then fret not thyſelf becauſe of ungodlineſs, tho' it ſtill remain in thy heart. Repine not, becauſe thou ſtill comeſt ſhort of the glorious image of God: nor yet, becauſe pride, ſelf-will, or unbelief, cleave to all thy words and works. And be not afraid to know all this evil of thy heart, to know thyſelf as alſo thou art known. Yea, deſire of God, that thou mayeſt not think of thyſelf more highly than thou oughteſt to thihk. Let thy continual prayer be

" Shew me, as my ſoul can bear,
The depth of inbred ſin:
All the unbelief declare,
The pride that lurks within!"

But when he heareth thy prayer, and unveils thy heart, when he ſhews thee thoroughly what ſpirit thou art of: then beware that thy Faith fail thee not, that thou ſuffer not thy ſhield to be torn from thee. Be abaſed. Be humbled in the duſt. See thyſelf nothing, leſs than nothing and vanity. But ſtill, "let not thy heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Sill hold faſt, "*I*, even I, *have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* And as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo is his love higher than even my ſins."— Therefore God is merciful to thee a ſinner! Such a ſinner as thou art! God is Love; and Chriſt hath died. Therefore the Father himſelf loveth thee. Thou art his child. Therefore he will withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Is it good, that the whole body of ſin, which is now crucified in thee, ſhould be deſtroyed? It ſhall be done. Thou ſhalt be "cleanſed from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit." Is it good, that nothing ſhould remain in thy heart, but the pure love of God alone? Be of good cheer! "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and mind and ſoul and ſtrength." "Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who alſo will do it." It is thy

part

part, patiently to continue in the work of Faith, and in the labour of love: and in cheerful peace, in humble confidence, with calm and resigned, and yet earnest expectation, to wait till the "zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this."

5. Fourthly, If they that *are in Christ, and walk after the spirit*, are not condemned for *sins of infirmity*, as neither for *involuntary failings*, nor for any thing whatever which they are not able to help: then beware, O thou that hast faith in his blood, that Satan herein "gain no advantage over thee." Thou art still foolish and weak, blind and ignorant. More weak than any words can express, more foolish than it can yet enter into thy heart to conceive, knowing nothing yet as thou oughtest to know. Yet let not all thy weakness and folly, or any fruit thereof, which thou art not yet able to avoid, shake thy faith, thy filial trust in God, or disturb thy peace or joy in the Lord. The rule which some give as to wilful sins, and which in that case, may perhaps be dangerous, is undoubtedly wise and safe, if it be applied only to the case of weakness and infirmities. Art thou fallen, O man of God?-Yet do not lie there, fretting thyself and bemoaning thy weakness: but meekly say, Lord, I shall fall thus every moment, unless thou uphold me with thy hand. And then arise! Leap and walk. Go on thy way. "Run with patience the race set before thee."

6. Lastly. Since a believer need not come into condemnation, even though he be *surprised* into what his soul abhors, (suppose his being surprised is not owing to any carelessness or wilful neglect of his own:) if thou who believest, art thus overtaken in a fault, then grieve unto the Lord; it shall be a precious balm: pour out thy heart before him, and shew him of thy trouble. And pray with all thy might to him who is "touched with the feeling of thy infirmities," that he would stablish and strengthen and settle thy soul, and suffer thee to

fall no more. But ſtill he condemneth thee not. Wherefore ſhouldeſt thou fear? Thou haſt no need of any "fear that hath torment." Thou ſhalt love him that loveth thee, and it ſufficeth: more love will bring more ſtrength. And as ſoon as thou loveſt him with all thy heart, thou ſhalt be "perfect and entire, lacking nothing." Wait in peace for that hour, when "the God of peace ſhall ſanctify thee wholly, ſo that thy whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body, may be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt!"

SERMON IX.

The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption.

ROMANS VIII. 15.

"Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage "again to Fear: but ye have received the "Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, "Father."

1. ST. PAUL here ſpeaks to thoſe who are the Children of God by Faith. Ye, ſaith he, who are indeed his children, have drank into his Spirit. "Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear. But becauſe ye are Sons, GOD hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

2. The Spirit of Bondage and Fear is widely diſtant from this loving Spirit of Adoption: Thoſe who are influenced only by ſlaviſh fear, cannot be termed, *The ſons of God.* Yet ſome of them may

be

be ſtyled his ſervants, and are "not far from the kingdom of heaven."

3. But it is to be feared, the bulk of mankind, yea, of what is called *The Chriſtian World*, have not attained even this; but are ſtill afar off "neither is God in all their thoughts." A few names may be found of thoſe who love God: a few more there are that fear him. But the greater part have neither the fear of God before their eyes, nor the love of God in their hearts.

4. Perhaps moſt of you, who by the mercy of God, now partake of a better Spirit, may remember the time when ye were as they, when ye were under the ſame condemnation. But at firſt ye knew it not, tho' ye were wallowing daily in your ſins and in your blood: till in due time ye *received the ſpirit of fear* (*ye received*; for this alſo is the gift of God:) and afterwards, Fear vaniſhed away, and the Spirit of Love filled your hearts.

5. One who is in the firſt ſtate of mind, without fear or love, is in ſcripture termed *a natural man*. One who is under the Spirit of Bondage and Fear, is ſometimes ſaid to be *under the Law*: (although that expreſſion more frequently ſignifies one, who is under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, who thinks himſelf obliged to obſerve all the Rites and Ceremonies of the Jewiſh Law.) But one who has exchanged the Spirit of Fear for the Spirit of Love, is properly ſaid, to be *under Grace*.

Now becauſe it highly imports us, to know what ſpirit we are of, I ſhall endeavour to point out diſtinctly, Firſt, The ſtate of a *natural man*: Secondly, That of one who is *under the Law*: and Thirdly, of one who is *under Grace*.

I. 1. And, Firſt, the ſtate of a *natural man*: This the Scripture repreſents as a ſtate of ſleep; The voice of God to him is "Awake, thou that ſleepeſt." For his ſoul is in a deep ſleep. His ſpiritual ſenſes are not awake: they diſcern neither

ſpiritual good nor evil. The eyes of his underſtanding are cloſed; they are ſealed together, and ſee not. Clouds and darkneſs continually reſt upon them; he lies in the valley of the ſhadow of death. Hence having no inlets for the knowledge of ſpiritual things, all the avenues of his ſoul being ſhut up, he is in groſs, ſtupid ignorance of whatever he is moſt concerned to know. He is utterly ignorant of God, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know. He is totally a ſtranger to the Law of God, as to its true, inward, ſpiritual meaning. He has no conception of that evangelical holineſs, without which no man can ſee the Lord; nor of the happineſs, which they only find, whoſe *Life is hid with Chriſt in God.*

2. And for this very reaſon, becauſe he is faſt aſleep, he is, in ſome ſenſe, at reſt. Becauſe he is blind, he is alſo ſecure: he ſaith, "Tuſh, there ſhall no harm happen unto me." The darkneſs which covers him on every ſide, keeps him in a kind of peace: (ſo far as peace can conſiſt with the works of the devil, and with an earthly, deviliſh mind.) He *ſees* not that he ſtands on the edge of the pit; therefore he *fears* it not. He cannot *tremble* at the danger he does not *know*. He has not underſtanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in no dread of God? Becauſe he is totally ignorant of him: if not "ſaying in his heart, There is no God; or, that he ſitteth on the circle of the heavens, and humbleth not himſelf to behold the things which are done on earth:" Yet ſatisfying himſelf as well, to all Epicurean intents and purpoſes by ſaying, "God is merciful:" confounding and ſwallowing up at once, in that unweildly idea of mercy, all his holineſs and eſſential hatred of ſin, all his juſtice, wiſdom and truth. He is in no dread of the vengeance denounced againſt thoſe who obey not the bleſſed Law of God, becauſe he underſtands it not. He imagines the main point is, To *do thus*, to be *outwardly* blameleſs: and ſees not that it extends to every

temper,

temper, desire, thought, motion of the heart. Or he fancies, that the obligation hereto is ceased; that Christ came to *destroy the Law and the Prophets*; to save his people *in*, not *from* their sins; to bring them to heaven, without holiness. Notwithstanding his own words, "Not one jot or tittle of the Law shall pass away, till all things are fulfilled: and, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

3. He is secure, because he is utterly ignorant of himself. Hence he talks of "repenting by and by," he does not indeed exactly know when; but some time or other before he dies: taking it for granted, That this is quite in his own power. For what should hinder his doing it, if he will? If he does but once set a resolution, no fear but he will make it good.

4. But this ignorance never so strongly glares, as in those who are termed, *Men of Learning*. If a natural man be one of these, he cannot talk at large of his rational faculties; of the freedom of his will, and the absolute necessity of such freedom, in order to constitute man a moral agent. He reads and argues, and proves to a demonstration, That every man may do as he will; may dispose his own heart to evil or good, as it seems best in his own eyes. Thus the god of this world spreads a double veil of blindness over his heart, lest by any means *the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine* upon it.

5. From the same ignorance of himself and God, there may sometimes arise in the natural man, a kind of *joy*, in congratulating himself, upon his own wisdom and goodness. And what the world calls joy, he may often possess. He may have pleasure in various kinds; either in gratifying the desires of the flesh, or the desire of the eye, or the pride of life: particularly if he has large possessions; if he enjoy an affluent fortune. Then he may *clothe* himself *in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously*

every day. And *ſo long as* he thus *doth well unto himſelf, men will* doubtleſs *ſpeak good of* him. They will ſay, He is a happy man. For indeed this is the ſum of worldly happineſs: to dreſs, and viſit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and riſe up to play.

6. It is not ſurpriſing, if one in ſuch circumſtances as theſe, dozed with the opiates of flattery and ſin, ſhould imagine among his other waking dreams, That he walks in great *liberty*. How eaſily may he perſuade himſelf, that he is at liberty from all *vulgar errors*, and from the *prejudice* of education, judging exactly right, and keeping clear of all extremes. "I am free (may he ſay) from all the *Enthuſiaſm* of weak and narrow ſouls: from *Superſtition*, the diſeaſe of fools and cowards, always righteous over much; and from *Bigotry*, continually incident to thoſe who have not a free and generous way of thinking." And too ſure it is, That he is altogether free, from the *wiſdom which cometh from above*, from holineſs, from the religion of the heart, from the whole mind which was in Chriſt.

7. For all this time, he is the ſervant of ſin. He commits ſin, more or leſs, day by day. Yet he is not troubled: he "is in no bondage;" (as ſome ſpeak) he feels no condemnation. He contents himſelf, (even though he ſhould profeſs to believe, that the Chriſtian Revelation is of God?) with, "Man is frail. We are all weak. Every man has his infirmity." Perhaps he quotes Scripture: "Why, does not Solomon ſay, "The righteous man falls into ſin ſeven times a day?" And doubtleſs, they are all Hypocrites or Enthuſiaſts who pretend to be better than their neighbours." If at any time a ſerious thought fixes upon him, he ſtifles it as ſoon as poſſible, with, "Why ſhould I fear, ſince God is merciful, and Chriſt died for ſinners?" Thus he remains a willing ſervant of ſin, content with the bondage of corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and ſatisfied therewith; not only not conquering ſin, but

not

not ſtriving to conquer, particularly that ſin, which doth ſo eaſily beſet him.

8. Such is the ſtate of every *natural man*; whether he be a groſs, ſcandalous tranſgreſſor, or a more reputable and decent ſinner, having the form, though not the power of godlineſs. But how can ſuch a one be *convinced of ſin?* How is he brought to *repent?* To be *under the Law?* To receive the *Spirit of Bondage to Fear?* This is the point which is next to be conſidered.

II. 1. By ſome awful providence, or by his word applied with the demonſtration of his Spirit, God touches the heart of him that lay aſleep in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death. He is terribly ſhaken out of his ſleep, and awakes into a conſciouſneſs of his danger. Perhaps in a moment, perhaps by degrees, the eyes of his underſtanding are opened, and now firſt (the veil being in part removed) diſcern the real ſtate he is in. Horrid light breaks in upon his ſoul; ſuch light, as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomleſs pit, from the loweſt deep, from a lake of fire, burning with brimſtone. He at laſt ſees, the loving, the merciful God, is alſo *a conſuming fire*; that he is a juſt God and a terrible, rendering to every man according to his works, entering into judgment with the ungodly for every idle word, yea, and for the imaginations of the heart. He now clearly perceives, that the great and holy God is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*; that he is an avenger of every one who rebelleth againſt him, and repayeth the wicked to his face; and that "it is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God."

2. The inward, ſpiritual meaning of the Law of God now begins to glare upon him. He perceives "the commandment is exceeding broad, and there is nothing hid from the light thereof." He is convinced, that every part of it relates not barely to outward ſin or obedience, but to what paſſes in the

ſecret

ſecret receſſes of the ſoul, which no eye but God's can penetrate. If he now hears, "Thou ſhalt not kill," God ſpeaks in thunder, "He that hateth his brother is a murtherer." He that ſaith unto his brother, "Thou fool," is obnoxious to hell fire." If the law ſay, "Thou ſhalt not commit adultery," the voice of the Lord ſounds in his ears, "He that looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And thus in every point, he feels the word of God, "quick and powerful, ſharper than a two edged ſword." It pierces even *to the dividing aſunder of his ſoul and ſpirit, his joints and marrow.* And ſo much the more, becauſe he is conſcious to *himſelf* of having neglected ſo great ſalvation; of having *trodden under foot the Son of God*, who would have ſaved him from his ſins, and *counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy*, a common, unſanctifying *thing*.

3. And as he knows, "all things are naked and "open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," ſo he ſees himſelf, naked, ſtript of all the fig-leaves which he had ſewed together, of all his poor pretences to religion or virtue, and his wretched excuſes for ſinning againſt God. He now ſees himſelf like the ancient ſacrifices, τέμαχοληιμένον, cleft in ſunder, as it were, from the neck downward, ſo that all within him ſtands conſeſt. His heart is bare, and he ſees it is all ſin, *deceitful above all things, deſperately wicked*; that it is altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is poſſible for tongue to expreſs: that there dwelleth therein no good thing, but unrighteouſneſs and ungodlineſs only; every motion thereof, temper and thought, being only evil continually.

4. And he not only ſees, but feels in himſelf, by an emotion of ſoul which he cannot deſcribe, that for the ſins of his heart, were his life without blame, (which yet it is not, and cannot be: ſeeing "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit") he deſerves

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to be caſt into the fire that never ſhall be quenched. He feels, that the *wages*, the juſt reward *of ſin*, of his ſin above all, *is death*; even the ſecond death, the death which dieth not, the deſtruction of body and ſoul in hell.

5. Here ends his pleaſing dream, his deluſive reſt, his falſe peace, his vain ſecurity. His joy now vaniſhes as a cloud; pleaſures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the taſte; he loaths the nauſeous ſweet; he is weary to bear them. The ſhadows of happineſs flee away, and ſink into oblivion. So that he is ſtript of all, and wanders to and fro, ſeeking reſt, but finding none.

6. The fumes of thoſe opiates being now diſpelled, he feels the anguiſh of a wounded ſpirit. He finds that ſin let looſe upon the ſoul (whether it be pride, anger, or evil deſire, whether ſelf-will, malice, envy, revenge, or any other) is perfect miſery. He feels ſorrow of heart for the bleſſings he has loſt, and the curſe which is come upon him; remorſe for having thus deſtroyed himſelf, and deſpiſed his own mercies; fear, from a lively ſenſe of the wrath of God, and of the puniſhment which he has juſtly deſerved, and which he ſees hanging over his head; fear of death, as being to him the gate of hell, the entrance of death eternal; fear of the devil, the executioner of the wrath and righteous vengeance of God; fear of men, who if they were able to kill his body, would thereby plunge both body and ſoul into hell; fear, ſometimes ariſing to ſuch a heighth, that the poor, ſinful, guilty ſoul, is terrified with every thing, with nothing, with ſhades, with a leaf ſhaken of the wind. Yea ſometimes it may even border upon diſtraction, making a man *drunken, though not with wine*, ſuſpending the exerciſe of the memory, of the underſtanding, of all the natural faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very brink of deſpair: ſo that he who trembles at the name of death, may yet be ready to plunge into it every moment, to *chuſe ſtrangling*

rather

rather than life. Well may such a man *roar*, like him of old, *for the very disquietness of his heart.* Well may he cry out, "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

7. Now he truly desires to break loose from sin, and begins to struggle with it. But tho' he strive with all his might, he cannot conquer; sin is mightier than he. He would fain escape; but he is so fast in prison, that he cannot get forth. He resolves against sin, but yet sins on: he sees the snare, and abhors, and runs into it. So much does his boasted reason avail! Only to inhance his guilt, and increase his misery. Such is the freedom of his will! Free only to evil; free to *drink in iniquity like water*; to wander farther and farther from the living God, and do more *Despite to the Spirit of grace!*

8. The more he strives, wishes, labours to be free, the more does he feel his chains, the grievous chains of sin, wherewith Satan binds and *leads him captive at his will:* his servant he is, tho' he repine ever so much; tho' he rebel, he cannot prevail. He is still in bondage and fear, by reason of sin: generally, of some outward sin, to which he is peculiarly disposed, either by nature, custom, or outward circumstances; but always, of some inward sin, some evil temper or unholy affection. And the more he frets against it, the more it prevails; he may bite, but cannot break his chain. Thus he toils without end, repenting and sinning, and repenting and sinning again, till at length the poor sinful, helpless wretch is even at his wits end, and can barely groan, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

9. This whole struggle of one who is *under the Law*, under the *Spirit of Fear and Bondage*, is beautifully described by the Apostle in the foregoing chapter, speaking in the person of an awakened man. "I (saith he) was alive without the Law once," ver. 9. I had much life, wisdom, strength and virtue; so I thought: "but when the commandment

mandment came, ſin revived, and I died." When the commandment, in its ſpiritual meaning, came to my heart, with the power of God, my inbred ſin was ſtirred up, fretted, inflamed, and all my virtue died away. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me," ver. 10, 11. It came upon me unawares, ſlew all my hopes, and plainly ſhewed, in the midſt of life I was in death.— "Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment, holy and juſt and good," ver. 12. I no longer lay the blame on this, but on the corruption of my own heart. I acknowledge that "the Law is ſpiritual: but I am carnal, ſold under ſin," ver. 14. I now ſee the ſpiritual nature of the Law, and my own carnal, deviliſh heart; *ſold under ſin*, totally enſlaved: (like ſlaves bought with money, who were abſolutely at their maſter's diſpoſal.) "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do," ver. 15. Such is the bondage under which I groan; ſuch the tyranny of my hard maſter. "To will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do," ver. 18, 19. "I find a law, [an inward conſtraining power,] that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me. For I delight in [or conſent to] the Law of God, after the inward man," (ver. 21, 22,) In my mind: ſo the Apoſtle explains himſelf in the words that immediately follow; (and ſo ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, *the inward man*, is underſtood in all other Greek Writers.) "But I ſee another Law in my members, [another conſtraining power,] warring againſt the Law of my mind, or inward man, and bringing me into captivity to the Law, [or power,] of ſin," ver. 23, dragging me as it were at my conqueror's chariot-wheels, into the very thing which my ſoul abhors. "O wretched man that I am, who

ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!" ver. 24. Who ſhall deliver me from this helpleſs, dying life, from this bondage of ſin and miſery! Till this is done, *I myſelf* (or rather, *that I*, αὐτὸς ἐγὼ, *that man* I am now perſonating) *with the mind*, or inward man, *ſerve the Law of God*; my mind, my conſcience is on God's ſide; *but with the fleſh*; with my body; *the Law of ſin*, ver. 25, being hurried away by a force I cannot reſiſt.

10. How lively a portraiture is this of one *under the Law!* One who feels the burden he cannot ſhake off; who pants after liberty, power and love, but it is in fear and bondage ſtill! Until the time that God anſwers the wretched man, crying out, "Who ſhall deliver me?" From this bondage of ſin, from this body of death? "The grace of God, through Jeſus Chriſt thy Lord."

III. 1. Then it is that this miſerable bondage ends, and he is no more *under the Law but under Grace.* This ſtate we are thirdly to conſider, the ſtate of one who has found *grace* or favour, in the ſight of God, even the Father, and who has the *grace*, or power of the Holy Ghoſt, reigning in his heart: who has received, in the language of the Apoſtle, *the Spirit of Adoption*, *whereby* he now cries, *Abba, Father!*

2. "He cried unto the Lord in his trouble, and God delivers him out of his diſtreſs." His eyes are opened in quite another manner than before, even to ſee a loving, gracious God. While he is calling, "I beſeech thee, to ſhew me thy glory," he hears a voice in his inmoſt ſoul, "I will make all my goodneſs paſs before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord: I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will ſhew mercy to whom I will ſhew mercy." And it is not long before "the Lord deſcends in the cloud, and proclaims the name of the Lord." Then he ſees (but not with eyes of fleſh and blood) "The Lord, the Lord God: merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering,

fering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth: keeping mercy for thouſands, and forgiving iniquities and tranſgreſſions and ſin."

3. Heavenly, healing light now breaks in upon his ſoul. He "looks on him whom he had pierced, and God who out of darkneſs commanded light to ſhine, ſhineth in his heart." He "ſees the light of the glorious love of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt." He hath a divine "evidence of things not ſeen" by ſenſe, even of "the deep things of God;" more particularly of the love of God, of his pardoning love to him that believes in Jeſus. Overpowered with the ſight, his whole ſoul cries out, "My Lord, and my God!" For he ſees all his iniquities laid on him, who "bare them in his own body on the tree:" he beholds the Lamb of God taking away his ſins. How clearly now does he diſcern, that "God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf! Making him a ſin-offering for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteous people of God through him!" And that he himſelf is reconciled to God, by that blood of the Covenant!

4. Here end both the guilt and power of ſin. He can now ſay, "I am crucified with Chriſt. Nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the fleſh, [even in this mortal body,] I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himſelf for me." Here end remorſe and ſorrow of heart, and the anguiſh of a wounded ſpirit. "God turneth his heavineſs into joy." He *made ſore*, and now *his hands bind up*. Here ends alſo that bondage unto fear; for "his heart ſtandeth faſt, believing in the Lord." He cannot fear any longer the wrath of God; for he knows it is now turned away from him, and looks upon him no more as an angry Judge, but as a loving Father. He cannot fear the Devil, knowing he has "no power, except it be given him from above." He fears not hell, being

an heir of the kingdom of heaven; conſequently, he has no fear of death: by reaſon whereof he was in time paſt, for ſo many years *ſubject to bondage*. Rather, knowing that "if the earthly houſe of this tabernacle be diſſolved, he hath a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He groaneth earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon, with that houſe which is from heaven." He groans to ſhake off this houſe of earth, that *mortality* may be *ſwallowed up of life*: knowing that God "hath wrought him for the ſelf ſame thing: who hath alſo given him the earneſt of his ſpirit."

5. And "where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" liberty not only from guilt and fear, but from ſin, from that heavieſt of all yokes, that baſeſt of all bondage. His labour is not now in vain. The ſnare is broken and he is delivered. He not only ſtrives, but likewiſe prevails; he not only fights, but conquers alſo. "Henceforth he doth not ſerve ſin" (chap. vi. 6. &c.) "He is dead unto ſin and alive unto God, ſin doth not now reign, even in his mortal body, nor doth he obey it in the deſires thereof." He does not "yield his members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, but as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God. For being now made free from ſin, he is become the ſervant of righteouſneſs."

6. Thus "having peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God," and having power over all ſin, over every evil deſire, and temper, and word, and work, he is a living witneſs of the "glorious liberty of the ſons of God:" all whom being partakers of *like precious faith*, bear record with one voice, "We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!"

7. It is this Spirit which continually "worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure." It is he that ſheds the love of God abroad in their hearts, and the love of all mankind; thereby

thereby purifying their hearts from the love of the world, from the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. It is by him they are delivered from anger and pride, from all vile and inordinate affections. In conſequence, they are delivered from evil words and works, from all unholineſs of converſation: doing no evil to any child of man, and being zealous of all good works.

8. To ſum up all. The *natural* man neither fears nor loves God; one *under the Law*, fears; one *under Grace*, loves him. The firſt, has no light in the things of God, but walks in utter darkneſs; the ſecond, ſees the painful light of hell; the third, the joyous light of heaven. He that ſleeps in death, has a falſe peace. He that is awakened has no peace at all. He that believes has true peace, the peace of God filling and ruling his heart. The Heathen, baptized or unbaptized, hath a fancied liberty, which is indeed licentiouſneſs: the Jew (or one under the Jewiſh diſpenſation) is in heavy, grievous bondage: the Chriſtian enjoys the true glorious liberty of the Sons of God. An unawakened child of the Devil, ſins willingly: one that is awakened ſins unwillingly: a child of God *ſinneth not*, but *keepeth himſelf, and the wicked one toucheth him not*. To conclude; the natural man neither conquers nor fights; the man under the Law fights with ſin, but cannot conquer: the man under Grace fights and conquers, yea, is "more than conqueror, through him that loveth him."

IV. 1. From this plain account of the threefold ſtate of man, the *natural*, the *legal*, and the *evangelical*, it appears, that it is not ſufficient, to divide mankind, into ſincere and inſincere. A man may be ſincere in any of theſe ſtates; not only when he has the *Spirit of Adoption*, but while he has the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*. Yea, while he has neither this fear, nor love. For undoubtedly there may be ſincere Heathens, as well as ſincere

Jews or Chriſtians. This circumſtance then, does by no means prove, that a man is in a ſtate of acceptance with God.

Examine yourſelves therefore, not only whether ye are ſincere, "but whether ye be in the faith." Examine narrowly; for it imports you much. What is the ruling principle in your ſoul? Is it the love of God? Is it the fear of God? Or is it neither one nor the other? Is it not rather, the love of the world? The love of pleaſure? Or gain? Or eaſe? Or reputation? If ſo, you are not come ſo far as a Jew. You are but a Heathen ſtill. Have you heaven in your heart? Have you the Spirit of Adoption, ever crying, *Abba, Father?* Or do you cry unto God, as "out of the belly of hell," overwhelmed with ſorrow and fear? Or are you a ſtranger to this whole affair, and cannot imagine what I mean? Heathen, pull off the maſk. Thou haſt never put on Chriſt. Stand bareſaced. Look up to heaven. And own before him that liveth for ever and ever, thou haſt no part either among the ſons or ſervants of God.

Whoſoever thou art, Doſt thou commit ſin, or doſt thou not? If thou doſt, is it willingly or unwillingly? In either caſe God hath told thee whoſe thou art. "He that committeth ſin is of the devil." If thou committeſt it willingly, thou art his faithful ſervant. He will not fail to reward thy labour. If unwillingly, ſtill thou art his ſervant. God deliver thee out of his hands!

Art thou daily fighting againſt all ſin? and daily more than conqueror? I acknowledge thee for a child of God. O ſtand faſt in thy glorious liberty. Art thou fighting, but not conquering; ſtriving for the maſtery, but not able to attain? Then thou art not yet a believer in Chriſt; but follow on; and thou ſhalt know the Lord. Art thou not fighting at all, but leading an eaſy, indolent, faſhionable life? O how haſt thou dared to name the name of Chriſt? Only to make it a reproach among the Heathen?

Awake

Awake thou ſleeper! Call upon thy God: before the deep ſwallow thee up.

2. Perhaps one reaſon why ſo many think of themſelves more highly than they ought to think, why they do not diſcern what ſtate they are in, is, becauſe theſe ſeveral ſtates of ſoul, are often mingled together, and in ſome meaſure meet, in one and the ſame perſon. This experience ſhews, that the legal ſtate, or ſtate of fear, is frequently mixt with the natural. For few men are ſo faſt aſleep in ſin, but they are ſometimes, more or leſs awakened. As the Spirit of God does not "wait for the call of man," ſo at ſome times he *will* be heard. He puts them in fear, ſo that for a ſeaſon, at leaſt, the Heathen "know themſelves to be but men." They feel the burthen of ſin, and earneſtly deſire to flee from the wrath to come. But not long. They ſeldom ſuffer the arrows of conviction to go deep into their ſouls; but quickly ſtifle the grace of God, and return to their wallowing in the mire.

In like manner, the evangelical ſtate, or ſtate of love, is frequently mixt with the legal. For few of thoſe who have the ſpirit of bondage and fear, remain always without hope. The wiſe and gracious God rarely ſuffers this; for he remembereth that we are but duſt. And he willeth not that "the fleſh ſhould fail before him, or the ſpirit which he hath made." Therefore at ſuch times as he ſeeth good, he gives a dawning of light unto them that ſit in darkneſs. He cauſes a part of his goodneſs to paſs before them, and ſhews he is a *God that heareth their prayer*. They ſee the promiſe which is by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, though it be afar off: and hereby they are encouraged to "run with patience the race which is ſet before them."

3. Another reaſon why many deceive themſelves, is, becauſe they do not conſider how far a man may go, and yet be in a natural, or at beſt a legal ſtate. A man may be of a compaſſionate and a benevolent temper, he may be affable, courteous, generous,

friendly; he may have ſome degree of meekneſs, patience, temperance, and of many other moral virtues. He may feel many deſires of ſhaking off all vice, and of attaining higher degrees of virtue. He may abſtain from much evil; perhaps from all that is groſsly contrary to juſtice, mercy or truth. He may do much good, may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the widow and fatherleſs. He may attend public worſhip, uſe prayer in private, read many books of devotion: and yet for all this, he may be a mere natural man, knowing neither himſelf nor God; equally a ſtranger to the ſpirit of fear and to that of love; having neither repented nor believed the goſpel.

But ſuppoſe there were added to all this, a deep conviction of ſin, with much fear of the wrath of God; vehement deſires to caſt off every ſin, and to fulfil all righteouſneſs; frequent rejoicing in hope, and touches of love often glancing upon the ſoul: yet neither do theſe prove a man to be *under Grace*, to have true, living, chriſtian Faith, unleſs the Spirit of Adoption abide in his heart, unleſs he can continually cry, Abba, Father!

4. Beware then, thou who art called by the name of Chriſt, that thou come not ſhort of the mark of thy high calling. Beware thou reſt not, either in a natural ſtate, with too many that are accounted *good Chriſtians*: or in a legal ſtate, wherein thoſe who are *highly eſteemed of men*, are generally content to live and die. Nay but God hath prepared better things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like devils, but to rejoice and love, like the Angels of God. "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength." Thou ſhalt *rejoice evermore*. Thou ſhalt *pray without ceaſing*. Thou ſhalt *in every thing give thanks*. Thou ſhalt do the will of God *on earth, as it is done in heaven*. "O prove thou what is that good

and

and acceptable and perfect will of God. Now preſent thyſelf a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. Whereunto thou haſt already attained, hold faſt, by reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before; until the God of peace make thee perfect in every good work, working in thee that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen!"

SERMON X.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

DISCOURSE I.

ROMANS VIII. 16.

"The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our Spirit, "that we are the Children of GOD."

HOW many vain men, not underſtanding what they ſpake, neither whereof they affirmed, have wreſted this Scripture, to the great loſs, if not the deſtruction, of their ſouls? How many have miſtaken the voice of their own imagination, for this *Witneſs of the Spirit of God?* And thence idly preſumed, they were the children of God, while they were doing the works of the devil? Theſe are truly and properly *Enthuſiaſts*; and indeed in the worſt ſenſe of the word. But with what difficulty are they convinced thereof? Eſpecially, if they have drank deep into that ſpirit of error. All endeavours to bring them to the knowledge of themſelves, they will then account *fighting againſt God.* And that vehemence and impetuoſity of ſpirit, which they call *contending earneſtly for the faith*, ſets them ſo far above all the uſual methods of conviction, that we may well ſay, *With men it is impoſſible.*

2. Who can then be ſurpriſed, if many reaſonable men, ſeeing the dreadful effects of this deluſion, and labouring to keep at the utmoſt diſtance from it, ſhould ſometimes lean toward another extreme?

If

If they are not forward to believe any who ſpeak of having this Witneſs, concerning which others have ſogrievouſly erred? If they are almoſt ready to ſet all down for *Enthuſiaſts*, who uſe the expreſſions which have been ſo terribly abuſed? Yea, if they ſhould queſtion, whether the witneſs or teſtimony here ſpoken of, be the privilege of *ordinary* Chriſtians, and not rather, one of thoſe *extraordinary* gifts, which they ſuppoſe belonged only to the apoſtolic age.

3. But is there any neceſſity laid upon us, of running either into one extreme or the other? May we not ſteer a middle courſe? Keep a ſufficient diſtance from that Spirit of error and enthuſiaſm, without denying the gift of God, and giving up the great privilege of his children? Surely we may. In order thereto, let us conſider, in the preſence and fear of God,

Firſt, What is this *Witneſs* or *Teſtimony of our Spirit?* What is the *Teſtimony of God's Spirit?* And how does he *bear witneſs with our Spirit that we are the children of God?*

Secondly, How is this joint teſtimony of God's Spirit and our own, clearly and ſolidly diſtinguiſhed from the preſumption of a natural man; and from the deluſion of the devil?

I. 1. Let us firſt conſider, what is the *Witneſs* or *Teſtimony of our Spirit.* But here I cannot but deſire all thoſe who are for ſwallowing up the *teſtimony of the Spirit of God*, in the *rational teſtimony* of our own ſpirit, to obſerve, that in this text the Apoſtle is ſo far from ſpeaking of the teſtimony of our ſpirit *only*, that it may be queſtioned, whether he ſpeaks of it *at all?* Whether he does not ſpeak, *only* of the teſtimony of God's Spirit? It does not appear, but the original text may be fairly underſtood thus: The Apoſtle had juſt ſaid, in the preceding

verſe,

verſe, "Ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father," and immediately ſubjoins, Αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα. (ſome copies read τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα) συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνευ μαῖι ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἐσμεν τέκνα Θεῦ. Which may be tranſlated, *The ſame ſpirit beareth witneſs to our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.* (The prepoſition σὺν only denoting, that he wi neſſes this *at the ſame time* that he enables us to cry Abba, Father!) But I contend not; ſeeing ſo many other texts, with the experience of all real Chriſtians ſufficiently evince, that there is in every believer, both the teſtimony of God's Spirit, and the teſtimony of his own, that he is a child of God.

2. With regard to the latter, the foundation thereof is laid in thoſe numerous texts of ſcripture, which deſcribe the marks of the children of God, and that ſo plain, that he which runneth may read them. Theſe are alſo collected together, and placed in the ſtrongeſt light, by many both ancient and modern writers. If any need farther light, he may receive it by attending on the miniſtry of God's word; by meditating thereon before God in ſecret, and by converſing with thoſe who have the knowledge of his ways. And by the Reaſon or Underſtanding that God has given him (which religion was deſigned not to extinguiſh, but to perfect: according to that of the Apoſtle, "Brethren be not children in underſtanding; in malice [or wickedneſs] be ye children; but in underſtanding be ye men," 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Every man applying thoſe ſcriptural marks to himſelf, may know, whether he is a child of God. Thus if he know, Firſt, *as many as are led by the ſpirit of God*, into all holy tempers and actions, *they are the ſons of God*, (for which he has the infallible aſſurance of holy writ;) Secondly, I am thus *led by the Spirit of God:* he will eaſily conclude, therefore I am a *Son of God.*

3. Agreeable to this are all thoſe plain declarations of St. John in his firſt epiſtle. "Hereby we know, that we do know him, if we keep his commandments,"

ments," ch. ii. ver. 3. "Whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby we know that we are in him," that we are indeed the children of God, ver. 5. "If ye know, that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteouſneſs is born of him," ver. 29. "We know, that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren," ch. iii. 4. "Hereby we know, that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him," ver. 18. Namely, becauſe we *love* one another, not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. "Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, becauſe he hath given us of his [loving] Spirit," ch. iv. 13. And, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the [obedient] Spirit which he hath given us," ch. iii. 24.

4. It is highly probable, there never were any children of God, from the beginning of the world unto this day, who were farther advanced in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, than the Apoſtle John at the time when he wrote theſe words, and the *Fathers in Chriſt* o whom he wrote. Notwithſtanding which, it is evident, both the Apoſtle himſelf and all thoſe pillars in God's temple, were very far from deſpiſing theſe marks, of their being the children of God; and that they applied them to their own ſouls for the confirmation of their faith. Yet all this is no other than rational evidence, the *witneſs of our ſpirit*, our reaſon or underſtanding. It all reſolves into this: thoſe who have theſe marks, they are the children of God. But we have theſe marks: therefore we are children of God.

5. But how does it appear, that we have theſe marks? This is a queſtion which ſtill remains. How does it appear, that we do love God and our neighbour? And that we keep his commandments? Obſerve, that the meaning of the queſtion is, How does it appear to *ourſelves?* (not to *others.*) I would aſk him then that propoſes this queſtion, How

does

does it appear to you, That you are alive? And that you are now in eaſe, and not in pain? Are you not immediately conſcious of it? By the ſame immediate conſciouſneſs you will know, if your ſoul is alive to God: if you are ſaved from the pain of proud wrath, and have the eaſe of a meek and quiet ſpirit. By the ſame means you cannot but perceive, if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the ſame, you muſt be directly aſſured, if you love your neighbour as yourſelf; if you are kindly affectioned to all mankind, and full of gentleneſs and long-ſuffering. And with regard to the outward mark of the children of God, which is (according to St. John) the keeping his commandments, you undoubtedly know in your own breaſt, if, by the grace of God, it belongs to you. Your conſcience informs you from day to day, if you do not take the name of God within your lips, unleſs with ſeriouſneſs and devotion, with reverence and godly fear: if you remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: if you honour your father and mother; if you do to all as you would they ſhould do unto you: poſſeſs your body in ſanctification and honour: and if whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the glory of God.

6. Now this is properly the *teſtimony of our own ſpirit:* even the teſtimony of our conſcience, that God hath given us to be holy of heart, and holy in outward converſation. It is a conſciouſneſs of our having received, in and by the ſpirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God, as belonging to his adopted children: even, a loving heart toward God, and toward all mankind, hanging with child-like confidence on God our Father, deſiring nothing but him, caſting all our care upon him, and embracing every child of man, with earneſt, tender affection; ſo as to be ready to lay down our life for our brother, as Chriſt laid down his life for us: a conſciouſneſs, that we are inwardly conformed, by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son;

Son, and that we walk before him in juſtice, mercy and truth, doing the things which are pleaſing in his ſight.

7. But what is that teſtimony of God's Spirit, which is ſuper-added to and conjoined with this? How does he *bear witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God?* It is hard to find words in the language of men, to explain *the deep things of God.* Indeed there are none that will adequately expreſs, what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might ſay (deſiring any who are taught of God, to correct, to ſoften, or ſtrengthen the expreſſion) The teſtimony of the Spirit, is an inward impreſſion on the ſoul, whereby the Spirit of God directly "witneſſes to my ſpirit, that I am a child of God;" that Jeſus Chriſt hath loved me, and given himſelf for me: and all my ſins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

8. That this *Teſtimony of the Spirit of God* muſt needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the *teſtimony of our own ſpirit*, may appear from this ſingle conſideration. We muſt be holy of heart, and holy in life, before we can be conſcious that we are ſo; before we can have *the teſtimony of our ſpirit*, that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we muſt love God, before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holineſs. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. "We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us." And we cannot know his pardoning love to us, till his ſpirit witneſſes it to our ſpirit. Since therefore this *teſtimony of his ſpirit* muſt precede the love of God and all holineſs, of conſequence it muſt precede our inward conſciouſneſs thereof, or, the *teſtimony of our ſpirit* concerning them.

9. Then, and not till then, when the Spirit of God beareth that witneſs to our ſpirit, "God hath loved thee, and given his own Son to be the propitiation for thy ſins; the Son of God hath loved thee, and hath waſhed thee from thy ſins in his blood:"

blood:" "We love God, becauſe he firſt loved us," and for his ſake we *love our brother alſo.* And of this we cannot but be conſcious to ourſelves: we "know the things that are freely given to us of God." We know that we love God and keep his commandments. And "hereby alſo we know that we are of God." This is that teſtimony of our own ſpirit; which, ſo long as we continue to love God and keep his commandments, continues joined with the teſtimony of God's Spirit, "that we are the children of God."

10. Not that I would, by any means, be underſtood, by any thing which has been ſpoken concerning it, to exclude the operation of the Spirit of God, even from the "teſtimony of our own ſpirit." In no wiſe. It is he that not only worketh in us every manner of thing that is good, but alſo ſhines upon his own work, and clearly ſhews what he has wrought. Accordingly this is ſpoken of by St. Paul, as one great end of our receiving the Spirit, "That we may know the things which are freely given to us of God:" that he may ſtrengthen the teſtimony of our conſcience, touching our *ſimplicity and godly ſincerity*, and give us to diſcern in a fuller and ſtronger light, that we now do the things which pleaſe him.

11. Should it ſtill be enquired, How does the Spirit of God, *bear witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God*, ſo as to exclude all doubt, and evince the reality of our ſonſhip? The anſwer is clear, from what has been obſerved above. And firſt, as to the witneſs of our ſpirit. The ſoul as intimately and evidently perceives, when it loves, delights, and rejoices in God, as when it loves and delights in any thing on earth. And it can no more doubt, whether it loves, delights and rejoices, or no, than whether it exiſts, or no. If therefore this be juſt reaſoning.

He that now loves God, that delights and rejoices in him, with an humble joy, an holy delight, and an obedient love, is a child of God:

But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in God;

Therefore I am a child of God:

Then a Chriſtian can in no wiſe doubt, of his being a child of God. Of the former propoſition, he has as full an aſſurance, as he has that the Scriptures are of God. And of his thus loving God, he has an inward proof, which is nothing ſhort of ſelf-evidence. Thus the "the teſtimony of our own ſpirit," is with the moſt intimate conviction manifeſted to our hearts, in ſuch a manner, as beyond all reaſonable doubt, to evince the reality of our ſonſhip.

12. The *manner* how the divine teſtimony is manifeſted to the heart, I do not take upon me to explain. "Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me: I cannot attain unto it. The wind bloweth: and I hear the ſound thereof. But I cannot tell how it cometh, or whither it goeth." As no one knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of a man that is in him; ſo the *manner* of the things of God knoweth no one, ſave the Spirit of God. But the fact we know: namely, that the Spirit of God does give a believer ſuch a teſtimony of his adoption, that while it is preſent to the ſoul, he can no more doubt the reality of his ſonſhip, than he can doubt the ſhining of the ſun, while he ſtands in the full blaze of his beams.

II. 1. How this joint teſtimony of God's Spirit and our ſpirit, may be clearly and ſolidly diſtinguiſhed, from the preſumption of a natural man, and from the deluſion of the devil, is the next thing to be conſidered. And it highly imports all who deſire the ſalvation of God, to conſider it with the deepeſt attention, as they would not deceive their own ſouls. An error in this is generally obſerved, to have the moſt fatal conſequences: the rather,

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becauſe he that errs ſeldom diſcovers his miſtake, till it is too late to remedy it.

2. And firſt, how is this teſtimony to be diſtinguiſhed from the preſumption of a natural man? It is certain, one who was never convinced of ſin, is always ready to flatter himſelf, and to think of himſelf, eſpecially in ſpiritual things, more highly than he ought to think. And hence, it is in no wiſe ſtrange if one who is vainly puffed up by his fleſhly mind, when he hears of this privilege of true Chriſtians, among whom he undoubtedly ranks himſelf, ſhould ſoon work himſelf up into a perſuaſion, that he is already poſſeſt thereof. Such inſtances now abound in the world, and have abounded in all ages. How then may the real teſtimony of the Spirit with our ſpirit, be diſtinguiſhed from this damning preſumption?

3. I anſwer, the holy Scriptures abound with marks, whereby the one may be diſtinguiſhed from the other. They deſcribe in the plaineſt manner the circumſtances which go before, which accompany, and which follow, the true, genuine teſtimony of the Spirit of God with the ſpirit of a believer. Whoever carefully weighs and attends to theſe, will not need to put darkneſs for light. He will perceive ſo wide a difference with reſpect to all theſe, between the real and the pretended witneſs of the Spirit, that there will be no danger, I might ſay, no poſſibility, of confounding the one with the other.

4. By theſe, one who vainly preſumes on the gift of God, might ſurely know, if he really deſired it, that he hath been hitherto *given up to a ſtrong deluſion*, and ſuffered to *believe* a lie. For the Scriptures lay down thoſe clear, obvious marks, as preceding, accompanying, and following that gift, which a little reflection would convince him, beyond all doubt, were never found in his ſoul. For inſtance, the Scripture deſcribes Repentance, or Conviction of ſin, as conſtantly going before this

witneſs of Pardon. So, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. iii. 2. "Repent ye, and believe the goſpel," Mark i. 15. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the remiſſion of ſins," Acts ii. 38. "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out," chap. iii. 19. In conformity whereto, our Church alſo continually places Repentance, before Pardon or the witneſs of it. "He pardoneth and abſolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy goſpel." "Almighty God—hath promiſed forgiveneſs of ſins to all them, who with hearty repentance and true faith return unto him." But he is a ſtranger even to this repentance. He hath never known "a broken and a contrite heart. The remembrance of his ſins was never grievous unto him, nor the burthen of them intolerable." In repeating thoſe words, he never meant what he ſaid; he merely paid a compliment to God. And were it only from the want of this previous work of God, he hath too great reaſon to believe, that he hath graſped a mere ſhadow, and never yet known the real privilege of the ſons of God.

5. Again, the Scriptures deſcribe the being born of God, which muſt precede the witneſs that we are his children, as a vaſt and mighty change; a change *from darkneſs to light*, as well as *from the power of Satan unto God:* as a *paſſing from death unto life*, a reſurrection from the dead. Thus the Apoſtle to the Epheſians; "You hath he quickened who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins," ch. ii. 1. And again, "When we were dead in ſins, he hath quickened us together with Chriſt; and hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together, in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus," ver. 5, 9. But what knoweth he concerning whom we now ſpeak, of any ſuch change as this? He is altogether unacquainted with this whole matter. This is a language which he does not underſtand. He tells you,

you, "He always was a Chriſtian. He knows no time when he had need of ſuch a change." By this alſo, if he give himſelf leave to think, may he know, that he is not born of the Spirit: that he has never yet known God; but has miſtaken the voice of Nature for the voice of God.

6. But waving the conſideration of whatever he has or has not experienced in time paſt; by the preſent marks may we eaſily diſtinguiſh a child of God, from a preſumptuous ſelf-deceiver. The Scripture deſcribes that joy in the Lord which accompanies the witneſs of his ſpirit, as an humble joy, a joy that abaſes to the duſt; that makes a pardoned ſinner cry out, "I am vile! What am I, or my father's houſe?—Now mine eye ſeeth thee, I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes!" And wherever lowlineſs is, there is meekneſs, patience, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering. There is a ſoft, yielding ſpirit; a mildneſs and ſweetneſs; a tenderneſs of ſoul which words cannot expreſs. But do theſe fruits attend that *ſuppoſed* teſtimony of the ſpirit, in a preſumptuous man? Juſt the reverſe. The more confident he is of the favour of God, the more is he lifted up; the more does he exalt himſelf; the more haughty and aſſuming is his whole behaviour. The ſtronger witneſs he imagines himſelf to have, the more overbearing is he to all around him; the more incapable of receiving any reproof, the more impatient of contradiction. Inſtead of being more meek, and gentle, and teachable, more *ſwift to hear, and ſlow to ſpeak*, he is more ſlow to hear and ſwift to ſpeak, more unready to learn of any one; more fiery and vehement in his temper, and eager in his converſation. Yea, perhaps, there will ſometimes appear a kind of fierceneſs in his air, his manner of ſpeaking, his whole deportment, as if he were juſt going to take the matter out of God's hands, and himſelf to *devour the adverſaries*.

7. Once more. The Scriptures teach, *this is the love of God* (the ſure mark thereof) *that we*

keep his commandments, 1 John v. 3. And our Lord himſelf ſaith, "he that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me," John xiv. 21. Love rejoices to obey; to do in every point, whatever is acceptable to the Beloved. A true lover of God haſtens to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. But is this the character of the preſumptuous pretender to the love of God? Nay, but his love gives him a liberty to diſobey, to break, not keep, the commandments of God. Perhaps when he was in fear of the wrath of God, he did labour to do his will. But now looking on himſelf as *not under the Law*, he thinks he is no longer obliged to obſerve it. He is therefore leſs zealous of good works, leſs careful to abſtain from evil; leſs watchful over his own heart, leſs jealous over his tongue. He is leſs earneſt to deny himſelf, and to take up his croſs daily. In a word, the whole form of his life is changed, ſince he has fancied himſelf to be at *liberty*. He is no longer *exerciſing himſelf unto godlineſs; wreſtling not only with fleſh and blood, but with principalities and powers, enduring hardſhips, agonizing to enter in at the ſtrait gate.* No; he has found an eaſier way to heaven; a broad, ſmooth, flowery path; in which he can ſaw to his ſoul, "Soul, take thy eaſe; eat, drink, and be merry." It follows with undeniable evidence, that he has not the true teſtimony of his own ſpirit. He cannot be conſcious of having thoſe marks which he hath not; that lowlineſs, meekneſs, and obedience. Nor yet can the Spirit of the God of truth bear witneſs to a lie; or teſtify that he is a child of God, when he is manifeſtly a child of the devil.

8. Diſcover thyſelf, thou poor ſelf-deceiver! Thou who art confident of being a child of God, thou who ſayeſt, "I have the witneſs in myſelf," and therefore defieſt all thy enemies. Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting; even in the balance of the ſanctuary. The word of the Lord hath tried thy ſoul, and proved thee to

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be reprobate ſilver. Thou art not lowly of heart. Therefore thou haſt not received the ſpirit of Jeſus unto this day. Thou art not gentle and meek; therefore thy joy is nothing worth: it is not joy in the Lord. Thou doſt not keep his commandments; therefore thou loveſt him not, neither art thou partaker of the Holy Ghoſt. It is conſequently, as certain and as evident, as the oracles of God can make it, his Spirit does not bear witneſs with thy ſpirit, that thou art a child of God. O cry unto him that the ſcales may fall off thine eyes, that thou mayeſt know thyſelf as thou art known; that thou mayeſt receive the ſentence of death in thyſelf, till thou hear the voice that raiſes the dead, ſaying, "Be of good cheer: thy ſins are forgiven; thy faith hath made thee whole."

9. "But how may one who has the real witneſs in himſelf diſtinguiſh it from preſumption:" how, I pray, do you diſtinguiſh day from night? How do you diſtinguiſh light from darkneſs? Or the light of a ſtar, or glimmering taper, from the light of the noon day ſun? Is there not an inherent, obvious, eſſential difference between the one and the other? And do you not immediately and directly perceive that difference, provided your ſenſes are rightly diſpoſed? In like manner, there is an inherent, eſſential difference between ſpiritual light and ſpiritual darkneſs: and between the light wherewith the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhines upon our heart, and that glimmering light, which ariſes only from *ſparks of our own kindling*. And this difference alſo is immediately and directly perceived, if our ſpiritual ſenſes are rightly diſpoſed.

10. To require a more minute and philoſophical account of the *manner* whereby we diſtinguiſh theſe, and of the *Criteria*, or intrinſic marks, whereby we know the voice of God, is to make a demand which can never be anſwered; no, not by one who has the deepeſt knowledge of God. Suppoſe, when Paul anſwered before Agrippa, the wiſe Roman had ſaid,

"Thou

"Thou talkeſt of hearing the voice of the Son of God. How doſt thou know, it was his voice? By what *Criteria*, what intrinſic marks, doſt thou know the voice of God? Explain to me, the *manner* of diſtinguiſhing this, from a human or angelic voice." Can you believe, the Apoſtle himſelf would have once attempted to anſwer ſo idle a demand? And yet doubtleſs the moment he heard that voice, he knew it was the voice of God. But *how* he knew this, who is able to explain? Perhaps neither man nor angel.

11. To come yet cloſer. Suppoſe God were now to ſpeak to any ſoul, "Thy ſins are forgiven thee." He muſt be willing that ſoul ſhould know his voice; otherwiſe he would ſpeak in vain. And he is able to effect this; for whenever he wills, to do is preſent with him. And he does effect it. That ſoul is abſolutely aſſured, "This voice is the voice of God." But yet he who hath that witneſs in himſelf, cannot explain it to one who hath not. Nor is it to be expected that he ſhould. Were there are any natural medium to prove, or natural method to explain the things of God, to unexperienced men; then the natural man might diſcern and know the things of the Spirit of God. But this is utterly contrary to the aſſertion of the Apoſtle, that *he cannot know them; becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*; even by ſpiritual ſenſes, which the natural man hath not.

12. "But how ſhall I know, that my ſpiritual ſenſes are rightly diſpoſed?" This alſo is a queſtion of vaſt importance. For if a man miſtake in this, he may run on in endleſs error and deluſion. And how am I aſſured, that this is not my caſe; and that I do not miſtake the voice of the Spirit?" Even by the *teſtimony of your own ſpirit*; by *the anſwer of a good conſcience toward God*. By the fruits which he hath wrought in your ſpirit you ſhall know the *teſtimony of the Spirit of God*. Hereby you ſhall know, that you are in no deluſion, that you have

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not deceived your own ſoul. The immediate fruits of the ſpirit, ruling in the heart, are "love, joy, peace; bowels of mercies, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering." And the outward fruits are, The doing good to all men; the doing no evil to any; and the walking in the light; a zealous, uniform obedience to all the commandments of God.

13. By the ſame fruits ſhall you diſtinguiſh this voice of God, from any deluſion of the devil. That proud ſpirit cannot humble thee before God. He neither can nor would ſoften thy heart, and melt it firſt into earneſt mourning after God, and then into filial love. It is not the adverſary of God and man, that enables thee to love thy neighbour; or to put on meekneſs, gentleneſs, patience, temperance, and the whole armour of God. He is not divided againſt himſelf, or a deſtroyer of ſin, his own work. No; it is none but the Son of God who cometh *to deſtroy the works of the devil.* As ſurely therefore as holineſs is of God, and as ſin is the work of the devil, ſurely the witneſs thou haſt in thyſelf is not of Satan, but of God.

14. Well then mayeſt thou ſay, "Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift!" Thanks be unto God, who giveth me to *know in whom I have believed:* who "hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into my heart, crying, Abba, Father," and even now *bearing witneſs with my ſpirit, that I am a child of God!* And ſee, that not only thy lips, but thy life ſhew forth his praiſe. He hath ſealed thee for his own; *glorify him* then *in thy body and thy ſpirit which are* his. Beloved, if thou *haſt this hope in* thyſelf, *purify* thyſelf *as he is pure.* While thou beholdeſt *what manner of love the Father hath given* thee, that thou ſhouldſt *be called a child of God*; *cleanſe* thyſelf *from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God:* and let all thy thoughts, words, and works be a ſpiritual ſacrifice, holy, acceptable to God thro' Chriſt Jeſus!

SERMON

SERMON XI.

The Witneſs of the Spirit.

DISCOURSE II.

ROMANS VIII. 16.

"The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, "that we are the children of God."

1. NONE who believes the ſcriptures to be the word of God, can doubt the *importance* of ſuch a truth as this: a truth revealed therein, not once only, not obſcurely, not incidentally; but frequently, and that in expreſs terms; but ſolemnly and of ſet purpoſe, as denoting one of the peculiar privileges of the children of God.

2. And it is the more neceſſary to explain and defend this truth, becauſe there is a danger on the right hand and on the left. If we deny it, there is a danger leſt our religion degenerate into mere formality: leſt "having a form of godlineſs," we neglect, if not *deny the power of it*. If we allow it, but do not underſtand what we allow, we are liable to run into all the wildneſs of enthuſiaſm. It is therefore needful in the higheſt degree, to guard thoſe who fear God from both theſe dangers, by a ſcriptural and rational illuſtration and confirmation of this momentous truth.

3. It may ſeem, ſomething of this kind is the more needful, becauſe ſo little has been wrote on the ſubject with any clearneſs: unleſs ſome diſcourſes on the wrong ſide of the queſtion, which explain it quite away. And it cannot be doubted but theſe were occaſioned, at leaſt in great meaſure, by the crude, unſcriptural, irrational explication of others, who "knew not what they ſpake nor whereof they affirmed."

4. It

4. It more nearly concerns the Methodiſts, ſo called, clearly to underſtand, explain and defend this doctrine, becauſe it is one grand part of the teſtimony, which God has given them to bear to all mankind. It is by this peculiar bleſſing upon them in ſearching the ſcriptures, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been for many years well nigh loſt and forgotten.

II. 1. But what is *the witneſs of the Spirit?* The original word μαρτυρία, may be rendered either, (as it is in ſeveral places,) *the witneſs*, or leſs ambiguouſly, *the teſtimony*, or *the record:* ſo it is rendered in our tranſlation, 1 John v. 11. *This is the record* (the teſtimony, the ſum of what God teſtifies in all the inſpired writings) *that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* The teſtimony now under conſideration is given by the Spirit of God to and with our ſpirit. He is the perſon teſtifying. What he teſtifies to us, is, "that we are the children of God." The immediate reſult of this teſtimony, is *the fruit of the Spirit*; namely, "love, joy, peace; long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs." And without theſe the teſtimony itſelf cannot continue. For it is inevitably deſtroyed, not only by the commiſſion of any outward ſin, or the omiſſion of known duty, but by giving way to any inward ſin: in a word, by whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God.

2. I obſerved many years ago, "It is hard to find words in the language of men, to explain the deep things of God. Indeed there are none that will adequately expreſs, what the Spirit of God works in his children. But perhaps one might ſay (deſiring any who are taught of God, to correct, ſoften, or ſtrengthen the expreſſion) By *the teſtimony of the Spirit* I mean, an inward impreſſion on the ſoul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witneſſes to my ſpirit, that I am a child of God,

God, that "Jeſus Chriſt hath loved me, and given himſelf for me." That all my ſins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

3. After twenty years further conſideration, I ſee no cauſe to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive, how any of theſe expreſſions may be altered, ſo as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expreſſions, which are more clear, or more agreeable to the word of God, I will readily lay theſe aſide.

4. Meantime let it be obſerved I do not mean hereby, that the Spirit of God teſtifies this by any outward voice: no, nor always by an inward voice, altho' he may do this ſometimes. Neither do I ſuppoſe, that he always applies to the heart, (tho' he often may) one or more texts of ſcripture. But he ſo works upon the ſoul by his immediate influence, and by a ſtrong, tho' inexplicable operation, that the ſtormy wind and troubled waves ſubſide, and there is a ſweet calm: the heart reſting as in the arms of Jeſus, and the ſinner being clearly ſatisfied, that God is reconciled, that all his "iniquities are forgiven, and his ſins covered."

5. Now what is the matter of diſpute concerning this? Not, whether there be a witneſs or teſtimony of the Spirit? Not, whether the Spirit does teſtify with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God? None can deny this, without flatly contradicting the ſcriptures, and charging a lie upon the God of truth. Therefore that there is a teſtimony of the Spirit, is acknowledged by all parties.

6. Neither is it queſtioned, whether there is an *indirect* witneſs or teſtimony, that we are the children of God. This is nearly, if not exactly the ſame with *the teſtimony of a good conſcience towards God*; and is the reſult of reaſon, or reflection on what we feel in our own ſouls. Strictly ſpeaking, it is a concluſion drawn partly from the word of God, and partly from our own experience. The

word

word of God ſays, every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God. Experience or inward conſciouſneſs tell me, that I have the fruit of the Spirit. And hence I rationally conclude, therefore I am a child of God. This is likewiſe allowed on all hands, and ſo is no matter of controverſy.

7. Nor do we aſſert, that there can be any real teſtimony of the Spirit, without the fruit of the Spirit. We aſſert, on the contrary, that the fruit of the Spirit immediately ſprings from this teſtimony: not always indeed in the ſame degree, even when the teſtimony is firſt given. And much leſs afterwards; neither joy nor peace are always at one ſtay. No, nor love: as neither is the teſtimony itſelf always equally ſtrong and clear.

8. But the point in queſtion is, whether there be any *direct teſtimony* of the Spirit at all? Whether there be any other teſtimony of the Spirit, than that which ariſes from a conſciouſneſs of the fruit?

III. 1. I believe there is, becauſe that is the plain, natural meaning of the text, "the Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God." It is manifeſt, here are two witneſſes mentioned, who together teſtify the ſame thing, the Spirit of God, and our own ſpirit. The late Biſhop of London in his ſermon on this text, ſeems aſtoniſhed that any one can doubt of this, which appears upon the very face of the words. Now, "*The teſtimony of our own ſpirit*, ſays the Biſhop, is one, which is the conſciouſneſs of our own ſincerity;" or to expreſs the ſame thing a little more clearly, the conſciouſneſs of the fruit of the Spirit. When our Spirit is conſcious of this, of love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, it eaſily infers from theſe premiſes, that we are the children of God.

2. It is true, that great man ſuppoſes the other witneſs to be "The conſcioufneſs of our own good works." This, he affirms, is *the teſtimony of God's Spirit.* But this is included in the teſtimony of our own ſpirit: Yea, and in ſincerity, even according to the common ſenſe of the word. So the Apoſtle, "Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have had our converſation in the world:" where it is plain, ſincerity refers to our words and actions, at leaſt as much as to our inward diſpoſitions. So that this is not another witneſs but the very ſame that he mentioned before: the conſcioufneſs of our good works being only one branch of the conſcioufneſs of our ſincerity. Conſequently here is only one witneſs ſtill. If therefore the text ſpeaks of two witneſſes, one of theſe is not the conſcioufneſs of our good works, neither of our ſincerity: all this being manifeſtly contained in *the teſtimony of our Spirit.*

3. What then is the other witneſs? This might eaſily be learned, if the text itſelf were not ſufficiently clear, from the verſe immediately preceding. "Ye have received, not the Spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." It follows, "The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God."

4. This is farther explained by the parallel text, Gal. iv. 6. "Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Is not this ſomething *immediate* and *direct*, not the reſult of reflection or argumentation? Does not this Spirit cry "Abba, Father, in our hearts," the moment it is given? Antecedently to any reflection upon our ſincerity, yea, to any reaſoning whatſoever? And is not this the plain, natural ſenſe of the words, which ſtrikes any one, as ſoon as he hears them? All theſe texts then,

then, in their moſt obvious meaning, deſcribe a direct teſtimony of the Spirit.

5. That *the teſtimony of the Spirit of God*, muſt in the very nature of things, be antecedent to *the teſtimony of our own ſpirit*, may appear from this ſingle conſideration. We muſt be holy in heart and life, before we can be conſcious that we are ſo. But we muſt love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holineſs. Now we cannot love God, 'till we know he loves us; "we love him, becauſe he firſt loved us." And we cannot know his love to us, 'till his Spirit witneſſes it to our ſpirit. 'Till then we cannot believe it: we cannot ſay, "the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me."

Then, only then we feel
Our intereſt in his blood,
And cry with joy unſpeakable,
Thou art my Lord, my God.

Since therefore the teſtimony of his Spirit muſt precede the love of God and all holineſs, of conſequence it muſt precede our conſciouſneſs thereof.

6. And here properly comes in, to confirm this ſcriptural doctrine, the experience of the children of God: the experience not of two or three, not of a few, but of a great multitude which no man can number. It has been confirmed, both in this and in all ages by *a cloud of* living and dying *witneſſes*. It is confirmed by your experience and *mine*. The Spirit itſelf bore witneſs to my ſpirit, that I was a child of God, gave me an *evidence* hereof, and I immediately cried, *Abba, Father!* And this I did, (and ſo did you) before I reflected on, or was conſcious of any fruit of the Spirit. It was from this teſtimony received, that love, joy, peace, and the whole fruit of the Spirit flowed. Firſt I heard,

Thy ſins are forgiven! Accepted thou art!
I liſtened, and heaven Sprung up in my heart.

7. But this is confirmed, not only by the experience of the children of God, thouſands of whom can declare, that they never did know themſelves to be in the favour of God, 'till it was directly witneſſed to them by his Spirit: but by all thoſe who are convinced of ſin, who feel the wrath of God abiding on them. Theſe cannot be ſatisfied with any thing leſs than a direct teſtimony from his Spirit, that he is "merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and remembers their ſins and iniquities no more. Tell any of theſe, "You are to know you are a child, by reflecting on what he has wrought in you, on your love, joy, and peace:" and will he not immediately reply, By all this I know, I am a child of the devil. I have no more love to God than the devil has: my carnal mind is enmity againſt God. I have no joy in the Holy Ghoſt: my ſoul is ſorrowful even unto death. I have no peace; my heart is a troubled ſea: I am all ſtorm and tempeſt. And which way can theſe ſouls poſſibly be comforted, but by a divine teſtimony, (not that they are good, or ſincere, or conformable to the ſcripture in heart and life, but) that God *juſtifieth the ungodly:* him that 'till the moment he is juſtified, is all ungodly, void of all true holineſs? *Him that worketh not*, that worketh nothing that is truly good, 'till he is conſcious that he is accepted, *not for* any *works of righteouſneſs which he hath done*, but by the mere, free mercy of God? Wholly and ſolely for what the Son of God hath done and ſuffered for him? And can it be any otherwiſe, if "a man is juſtified by faith, without the works of the law?" If ſo, what inward or outward goodneſs can he be conſcious of antecedent to his juſtification? Nay, is not the *having nothing to pay*, that is, the being conſcious that *there dwelleth in us no good thing*, neither inward nor outward goodneſs, eſſentially, indiſpenſably neceſſary, before we can be "juſtified freely, thro' the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt?" Was ever any man

juſtified

juſtified ſince his coming into the world, or can any man ever be juſtified, 'till he is brought to that point,

"I give up every plea, beſide
Lord, I am damn'd—But thou haſt died!"

8. Every one therefore who denies the exiſtence of ſuch a teſtimony, does in effect deny juſtification by faith. It follows, that either he never experienced this, either he never was juſtified, or that he has forgotten, (as St. Peter ſpeaks,) τὸ καθαρισμὸν τῶν πάλαι ἁμαρτίων, *the purification from his former ſins*, the experience he then had himſelf, the manner wherein God wrought in his own ſoul, when his former ſins were blotted out.

9. And the experience even of the children of the world, here confirms that of the children of God. Many of theſe have a deſire to pleaſe God: ſome of them take much pains to pleaſe him. But do they not, one and all, count it the higheſt abſurdity, for any to talk of "*knowing* his ſins are forgiven?" Which of *them* even pretends to any ſuch thing? And yet many of them are conſcious of their own ſincerity. Many of them undoubtedly have, in a degree, the teſtimony of their own ſpirit, a conſciouſneſs of their own uprightneſs. But this brings them no conſciouſneſs, that they are forgiven, no knowledge that they are the children of God. Yea, the more ſincere they are, the more uneaſy they generally are, for want of knowing it: plainly ſhewing that this cannot be known, in a ſatisfactory manner, by the bare teſtimony of our own ſpirit, without God's directly teſtifying, that we are his children.

IV. But abundance of objections have been made to this; the chief of which it may be well to conſider.

1. It is objected firſt. "Experience is not ſufficient, to prove a doctrine which is not founded on

ſcripture." This is undoubtedly true; and it is an important truth; but it does not affect the preſent queſtion. For it has been ſhewn, that this doctrine is founded on ſcripture. Therefore experience is properly alledged to confirm it.

2. "But madmen, French prophets and enthuſiaſts of every kind have imagined they experienced this witneſs." They have ſo. And perhaps not a few of them did, although they did not retain it long. But if they did not, this is no proof at all, that others have not experienced it: as a madman's *imagining* himſelf a king, does not prove, that there are no *real* kings.

"Nay many who pleaded ſtrongly for this, have utterly decried the Bible." Perhaps ſo; but this was no neceſſary conſequence: thouſands plead for it, who have the higheſt eſteem for the Bible.

"Yea, but many have fatally deceived themſelves hereby, and got above all conviction."

And yet a ſcriptural doctrine is no worſe, tho' men abuſe it to their own deſtruction.

3. 'But I lay it down as an undoubted truth, the fruit of the Spirit is the witneſs of the Spirit." Not undoubted; thouſands doubt of, yea flatly deny it: but to let that paſs. "If this witneſs be ſufficient, there is no need of any other. But it is ſufficient, unleſs in one of theſe caſes, 1. The *total abſence* of the fruit of the Spirit." And this is the caſe, when the direct witneſs is firſt given: 2. "The *not perceiving it.* But to contend for it in this caſe, is to contend for being in the favour of God, and not knowing it." True, not knowing it at that time any otherwiſe, than by the teſtimony which is given for that end. And this we do contend for: we contend that the direct witneſs may ſhine clear, even while the indirect one is under a cloud.

4. It is objected, ſecondly, "The deſign of the witneſs contended for, is to prove that the profeſſion we make is genuine. But it does not prove this,"

this." I anſwer, the proving this, is not the deſign of it. It is antecedent to our making any profeſſion at all, but that of being loſt, undone, guilty, helpleſs ſinners. It is deſigned to aſſure thoſe to whom it is given, that they are the children of God: that they are "juſtified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt." And this does not ſuppoſe, that their preceding thoughts, words and actions, are conformable to the rule of ſcripture. It ſuppoſes quite the reverſe, namely, That they are ſinners all over, ſinners both in heart and life. Were it otherwiſe, God would *juſtify the godly*; and *their own works* would be *counted to them for righteouſneſs*. And I cannot but fear that a ſuppoſition of our being juſtified by works, is at the root of all their objections. For who ever cordially believes, that God *imputes* to all that are juſtified, *righteouſneſs without works*, will find no difficulty in allowing the witneſs of his Spirit, preceding the fruit of it.

5. It is objected, thirdly, "One evangeliſt ſays, "your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him." The other evangeliſt calls the ſame thing *good gifts*; abundantly demonſtrating that the Spirit's way of bearing witneſs, is by giving good gifts." Nay, here is nothing at all about *bearing witneſs*, either in the one text or the other. Therefore 'till this demonſtration is better demonſtrated, I let it ſtand as it is.

6. It is objected, fourthly, "The ſcripture ſays, *the tree is known by its fruits. Prove all things. Try the ſpirits. Examine yourſelves.*" Moſt true: therefore let every man who believes he *hath the witneſs in himſelf, try* whether it be of God; if the fruit follow, it is, otherwiſe it is not. For certainly *the tree is known by its fruit*: Hereby we *prove*, if it be of God. "But the direct witneſs is never referred to in the book of God." Not as ſtanding alone, not as a ſingle witneſs, but as connected with the other: As giving a *joint teſtimony*, teſtifying

teſtifying *with our ſpirit*, that we are children of God. And who is able to prove, that it is not *thus* referred to, in this very ſcripture, "Examine yourſelves whether ye be in the faith: prove your own-ſelves. Know ye not yourſelves, that Jeſus Chriſt is in you?" It is by no means clear, that they did not know this, by a *direct* as well as a *remote* witneſs. How is it proved, that they did not know it, firſt, by an inward conſciouſneſs, and then by love, joy and peace?

7. "But the teſtimony ariſing from the internal and external change, is conſtantly referred to in the Bible." It is ſo. And we conſtantly refer thereto, to confirm the teſtimony of the Spirit.

"Nay, all the marks *you* have given, whereby to diſtinguiſh the operations of God's Spirit from deluſion, refer to the change wrought in us and upon us." This likewiſe is undoubtedly true.

8. It is objected, fifthly, that "The direct witneſs of the Spirit, does not ſecure us from the greateſt deluſion. And is that a witneſs fit to be truſted, whoſe teſtimony cannot be depended on? That is forced to fly to ſomething elſe, to prove what it aſſerts?" I anſwer. To ſecure us from all deluſion, God gives us two witneſſes that we are his children. And this they teſtify conjointly. Therefore "what God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder." And while they are joined, we cannot be deluded: their teſtimony can be depended on. They are fit to be truſted in the higheſt degree, and need nothing elſe to prove what they aſſert.

"Nay, the direct witneſs only aſſerts, but does not prove any thing." By two witneſſes ſhall every word be eſtabliſhed. And when the Spirit *witneſſes with our ſpirit*, as God deſigns it to do, then it fully proves that we are children of God.

9. It is objected, ſixthly. "You own the change wrought is a ſufficient teſtimony, unleſs in the caſe of ſevere trials, ſuch as that of our Saviour upon the

the croſs. But none of us can be tried in that manner." But you or I may be tried in ſuch a manner, and ſo may any other child of God, that it will be impoſſible for us to keep our filial confidence in God, without the direct witneſs of his Spirit.

10. It is objected, laſtly, "The greateſt contenders for it, are ſome of the proudeſt and moſt uncharitable of men." Perhaps ſome of the *hotteſt* contenders for it, are both proud and uncharitable. But many of the *firmeſt* contenders for it, are eminently meek and lowly in heart: and indeed in all other reſpects alſo,

True followers of their lamb-like Lord.

The preceding objections are the moſt conſiderable that I have heard, and I believe contain the ſtrength of the cauſe. Yet I apprehend whoever calmly and impartially conſiders thoſe objections and the anſwers together, will eaſily ſee, that they do not deſtroy, no, nor weaken the evidence of that great truth, that the Spirit of God does *directly*, as well as *indirectly* teſtify, that we are children of God.

V. 1. The ſum of all is this. The teſtimony of the Spirit is an inward impreſſion on the ſouls of believers, whereby the Spirit of God directly teſtifies to their ſpirit, that they are children of God. And it is not queſtioned, whether there is a teſtimony of the Spirit? But whether there is any *direct teſtimony?* Whether there is any other than that which ariſes from a conſciouſneſs of the fruit of the Spirit? We believe there is: becauſe this is the plain natural meaning of the text, illuſtrated both by the preceding words, and by the parallel paſſage in the epiſtle to the Galatians: becauſe, in the nature of the thing, the teſtimony muſt precede the fruit which ſprings from it, and becauſe this plain meaning of the word of God is confirmed by the experience of innumerable chil-

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dren of God: yea, and by the experience of all who are convinced of ſin, who can never reſt, 'till they have a direct witneſs: and even of the children of the world, who not having the witneſs in themſelves, one and all declare, none can *know* his ſins forgiven.

2. And whereas it is objected, that experience is not ſufficient to prove a doctrine unſupported by ſcripture: that madmen and enthuſiaſts of every kind, have imagined ſuch a witneſs: that the deſign of that witneſs is to prove our profeſſion genuine, which deſign it does not anſwer: that the ſcripture ſays, "The tree is known by its fruit; examine yourſelves; prove your ownſelves;" and mean time the direct witneſs is never referred to in all the book of God: that it does not ſecure us from the greateſt deluſions: and, laſtly, that the change wrought in us is a ſufficient teſtimony, unleſs in ſuch trials as Chriſt alone ſuffered. We anſwer, 1. Experience is ſufficient to *confirm* a doctrine, which is grounded on ſcripture: 2. Tho' many fancy they experience what they do not, this is no prejudice to real experience: 3. The deſign of that witneſs is, to aſſure us we are children of God. And this deſign it does anſwer. 4. The true witneſs of the Spirit is known by its fruit, love, peace, joy; not indeed preceding, but following it: 5. It cannot be proved, that the direct, as well as the indirect witneſs, is not referred to in that very text, "Know ye not your ownſelves that Jeſus Chriſt is in you?" 6. The Spirit of God *witneſſing with our ſpirit* does ſecure us from all deluſion: and, laſtly, we are all liable to trials, wherein the teſtimony of our own ſpirit is not ſufficient; wherein nothing leſs than the direct teſtimony of God's Spirit can aſſure us that we are his children.

3. Two inferences may be drawn from the whole. The firſt, let none ever preſume to reſt, in any ſuppoſed teſtimony of the Spirit, which is

ſeparate

ſeparate from the fruit of it. If the Spirit of God does really teſtify that we are the children of God, the immediate conſequence will be the fruit of the Spirit, even, "love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs, temperance." And however this fruit may be clouded for a while, during the time of ſtrong temptation, ſo that it does not appear to the tempted perſon, while Satan is *ſifting him as wheat*, yet the ſubſtantial part of it remains, even under the thickeſt cloud. It is true, joy in the Holy Ghoſt may be withdrawn, during the hour of trial; yea, the ſoul may be *exceeding ſorrowful*, while *the hour and power of darkneſs* continue. But even this is generally reſtored with increaſe, till we rejoice *with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*.

4. The ſecond inference is, let none reſt in any ſuppoſed fruit of the Spirit without the witneſs. There may be foretaſtes of joy, of peace, of love, and thoſe not deluſive, but really from God, long before we have the witneſs in ourſelves, before the Spirit of God witneſſes with our ſpirits, that we have "redemption in the blood of Jeſus, even the forgiveneſs of ſins." Yea there may be a degree of long-ſuffering, of gentleneſs, of fidelity, meekneſs, temperance, (not a ſhadow thereof, but a real degree, by the preventing grace of God) before we are *accepted in the Beloved*, and conſequently before we have a teſtimony of our acceptance. But it is by no means adviſable to reſt here; it is at the peril of our ſouls if we do. If we are wiſe we ſhall be continually crying to God, until his Spirit cry in our heart, *Abba, Father!* This is the privilege of all the children of God, and without this we can never be aſſured that we are his children. Without this we can not retain a ſteady peace, nor avoid perplexing doubts and fears. But when we have once received this *Spirit of adoption*, this *peace which paſſes all underſtanding*, and which expells all painful doubt and fear, will "keep our hearts and minds in Chriſt Jeſus." And when this

has

has brought forth its genuine fruit, all inward and outward holineſs, it is undoubtedly the will of him that calleth us, to give us alway what he has once given. So that there is no need, that we ſhould ever more be deprived, of either the teſtimony of God's Spirit, or the teſtimony of our own, the conſciouſneſs of our walking in all righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

NEWRY, April 4, 1767.

SERMON XII.

THE WITNESS OF OUR OWN SPIRIT.

2 CORINTHIANS I. 12.

"This is our Rejoicing, the Teſtimony of our "Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly "Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by "the Grace of God, we have had our Con-"verſation in the World."

1. SUCH is the voice of every true believer in Chriſt, ſo long as he abides in faith and love. "He that followeth me, ſaith our Lord, walketh not in darkneſs:" and while he hath the light, he rejoiceth therein. "As he hath received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo he walketh in him." And while he walketh in him, the Exhortation of the Apoſtle takes place in his ſoul day by day, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I ſay, rejoice"

2. But that we may not build our houſe upon the ſand, (leſt when the rains deſcend, and the winds blow, and the floods ariſe and beat upon it, it fall, and great be the fall thereof) I intend, in the following Diſcourſe, to ſhew, what is the nature and ground of a Chriſtian's joy. We know,

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in general, it is that happy peace, that calm ſatisfaction of ſpirit, which ariſes from ſuch a teſtimony of his conſcience, as is here deſcribed by the Apoſtle. But in order to underſtand this the more thoroughly, it will be requiſite to weigh all his words: whence will eaſily appear, both what we are to underſtand by *Conſcience*, and what, by the *Teſtimony* thereof; and alſo, how he that hath this Teſtimony rejoiceth evermore.

3. And, firſt, What are we to underſtand by *Conſcience?* What is the meaning of this word that is in every one's mouth? One would imagine, it was an exceeding difficult thing, to diſcover this, when we conſider how large and numerous volumes have been from time to time wrote on this ſubject: and how all the treaſures of ancient and modern learning have been ranſacked, in order to explain it. And yet it is to be feared, it has not received much light from all thoſe elaborate enquiries. Rather, have not moſt of thoſe writers puzzled the cauſe; "darkening counſel by words without knowledge;" perplexing a ſubject, plain in itſelf, and eaſy to be underſtood? For ſet aſide but hard words, and every man of an honeſt heart will ſoon underſtand the thing.

4. God has made us thinking beings, capable of perceiving what is preſent, and of reflecting or looking back on what is paſt. In particular, we are capable of perceiving whatſoever paſſes in our own hearts or lives; of knowing whatſoever we feel or do; and that either while it paſſes, or when it is paſt. This we mean when we ſay, Man is a *conſcious* being: he hath a *conſciouſneſs* or inward perception, both of things preſent and paſt, relating to himſelf, of his own tempers and outward behaviour. But what we uſually term *conſcience*, implies, ſomewhat more than this. It is not barely, the knowledge of our preſent, or the remembrance of our preceding life. To remember, to bear witneſs either of paſt or preſent things, is only

one, and the leaſt office of Conſcience. Its main buſineſs is to excuſe or accuſe, to approve or diſapprove, to acquit or condemn.

5. Some late writers indeed have given a new name to this, and have choſe to ſtile it, a *moral ſenſe*. But the old word ſeems preferable to the new, were it only on this account, that it is more common and familiar among men, and therefore eaſier to be underſtood. And to chriſtians it is undeniably preferable, on another account alſo; namely, becauſe it is ſcriptural, becauſe it is the word which the wiſdom of God hath choſe to uſe in the inſpired Writings.

And according to the meaning wherein it is generally uſed there, particularly in the Epiſtles of St. Paul, we may underſtand by conſcience, a faculty or power, implanted by God in every ſoul that comes into the world, of perceiving what is right or wrong in his own heart or life, in his tempers, thoughts, words and actions.

6. But what is the Rule whereby men are to judge of right and wrong? Whereby their conſcience is to be directed? The rule of heathens (as the Apoſtle teaches elſewhere) is "*the law written in their hearts.*" "*Theſe*, ſaith he, *not having the* [outward] *law, are a law unto themſelves: who ſhew the work of the law* [that which the outward law preſcribes] *written in their heart* [by the finger of God;] *their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs*, [whether they walk by this rule, or not;] *and their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or even excuſing*, [acquitting, defending them (ἢ καὶ ἀπολογεμένων) Rom. ii. 14, 15. But the Chriſtian Rule of right and wrong is the Word of God, the writings of the Old and New Teſtament: all which the Prophets and *holy men of old* wrote, *as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt: all* that *Scripture* which was *given by inſpiration of God, and* which *is* indeed *profitable for doctrine*, or touching the whole will of God: *for reproof* of what is

is contrary thereto; *for correction* of error, *and for inſtruction* (or training us up) *in righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

This is *a lantern unto* a Chriſtian's *feet, and a light in all his paths.* This alone he receives as his rule of right or wrong, of whatever is really good or evil. He eſteems nothing good, but what is here enjoined, either directly or by plain conſequences. He accounts nothing evil but what is here forbidden, either in terms, or by undeniable inferences. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins, (either directly or by plain conſequence) he believes to be of an indifferent nature, to be in itſelf neither good nor evil: this being the whole and ſole outward rule, whereby his conſcience is to be directed in all things.

7. And if it be directed thereby in fact, then hath he *the anſwer of a good conſcience toward God. A good conſcience* is what is elſewhere termed by the Apoſtle, a *conſcience void of offence.* So, what he at one time expreſſes thus, "I have lived in all good conſcience before God until this day," Acts xxiii. 1. he denotes at another, by that expreſſion, "herein do I exerciſe myſelf, to have a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward man," chap. xxiv. 16. Now in order to this, there is abſolutely required, Firſt, a right underſtanding of the word of God, of his *holy and acceptable and perfect will* concerning us, as it is revealed therein. For it is impoſſible we ſhould walk by a rule, if we do not know what it means. There is, Secondly, required (which how few have attained!) a true knowledge of ourſelves; a knowledge both of our hearts and lives, of our inward tempers and outward converſation: ſeeing if we know them not, it is not poſſible that we ſhould compare them with our rule. There is required Thirdly, an agreement of our hearts and lives, of our tempers and converſation, of our thoughts, and words, and works with that rule, with the written word of God. For without this, if we

have any conſcience at all, it can be only an evil conſcience. There is, Fourthly, required, an inward perception, of this agreement with our rule. And this habitual perception, this inward conſciouſneſs itſelf, is properly a *good conſcience*; or (in the other phraſe of the Apoſtle) "A conſcience void of offence, toward God and toward man."

8. But whoever deſires to have a conſcience thus void of offence, let him ſee that he lay the right foundation. Let him remember, *Other foundation of this can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jeſus Chriſt.* And let him alſo be mindful, that no man buildeth on him but by a living faith; that no man is a partaker of Chriſt, until he can clearly teſtify, "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God;" in him who is now *revealed* in my heart; who *loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* Faith alone is that evidence, that conviction, that demonſtration of things inviſible, whereby the eyes of our underſtanding being opened, and divine light poured in upon them, we *ſee the wondrous things of God's law*, the excellency and purity of it; the height and depth, and length and breadth thereof, and of every commandment contained therein. It is by faith, that beholding *the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, we perceive as in a glaſs, all that is in ourſelves, yea, the inmoſt motions of our ſouls. And by this alone can that bleſſed love of God be *ſhed abroad in our hearts*, which enables us ſo to love one another as Chriſt loved us. By this, is that gracious promiſe fulfilled, unto all the *Iſrael* of God, *I will put my laws into their minds, and write* (or engrave) *them in their hearts*, Heb. viii. 10. Hereby producing in their ſouls, an entire agreement with his holy and perfect law, and *bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.*

And as an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, ſo a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. As the heart therefore of a believer, ſo likewiſe his life is thoroughly

thoroughly conformed to the rule of God's commandments. In a conſcioufneſs whereof, he can give glory to God, and ſay, with the Apoſtle, *This is our rejoicing, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.* 2 Cor. i. 12.

9. *We have had our converſation.* The Apoſtle in the Original, expreſſes this by one ſingle word (ἀνεστράφημεν.) But the meaning thereof is exceeding broad, taking in our whole deportment, yea, every inward as well as outward circumſtance, whether relating to our ſoul or body. It includes every motion of our heart, of our tongue, of our hands and bodily members. It extends to all our actions and words; to the employment of all our powers and faculties; to the manner of uſing every talent we have received, with reſpect either to God or man.

10. *We have had our converſation in the world*; even in the world of the ungodly: not only among the children of God (that were, comparatively, a little thing:) but among the children of the devil, among thoſe that *lie in wickedneſs*, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, *in the Wicked One.* What a world is this! how thoroughly impregnated with the ſpirit it continually breathes! as our God is good and doth good, ſo the god of this world, and all his children, are evil, and do evil, (ſo far as they are ſuffered) to all the children of God. Like their father, they are always lying in wait, or *walking about, ſeeking whom they may devour*: uſing fraud or force, ſecret wiles or open violence, to deſtroy thoſe who are not of the world: continually warring againſt our ſouls, and by old or new weapons and devices of every kind, labouring to bring them back into the ſnare of the devil, into the broad road that leadeth to deſtruction.

11. *We have had our* whole *converſation in* ſuch *a world, in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity.* Firſt, *in ſimplicity.* This is what our Lord recommends,

under the name of a *ſingle eye*. "The light of the body, ſaith he, is the eye. If therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light." The meaning whereof is this. What the eye is to the body, that the intention is, to all the words and actions. If therefore this eye of thy ſoul be ſingle, all thy actions and converſation ſhall be *full of light*, of the light of heaven; of love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

We are then ſimple of heart, when the eye of our mind is ſingly fixt on God: when in all things we aim at God alone, as our God, our Portion, our Strength, our Happineſs, our exceeding great Reward, our All, in time and eternity. This is ſimplicity; when a ſteady view, a ſingle intention of promoting his glory, of doing and ſuffering his bleſſed will, runs through our whole ſoul, fills all our heart, and is the conſtant ſpring of all our thoughts, deſires and purpoſes.

12. *We have had our converſation in the world*, Secondly, *in godly ſincerity*. The difference between ſimplicity and ſincerity, ſeems to be chiefly this: ſimplicity regards the intention itſelf, ſincerity, the execution of it. And this ſincerity relates not barely to our words, but to our whole converſation, as deſcribed above. It is not here to be underſtood in that narrow ſenſe, wherein St. Paul himſelf ſometimes uſes it, for ſpeaking the truth, or abſtaining from guile, from craft and diſſimulation. But in a more extenſive meaning, as actually hitting the mark which we aim at by ſimplicity. Accordingly it implies in this place, that we do in fact ſpeak and do all to the glory of God: that all our words are not only pointed at this, but actually conducive thereto; that all our actions flow on in an even ſtream, uniformly ſubſervient to this great end: and that in our whole lives, we are moving ſtraight toward God, and that continually; walking ſteadily on in the highway of Holineſs, in the paths of Juſtice, Mercy and Truth.

13. This

13. This ſincerity is termed by the Apoſtle, godly Sincerity, or the Sincerity of God, (εἰλικρινείᾳ Θεῦ) to prevent our miſtaking or confounding it with the ſincerity of the heathens: (for they had alſo a kind of ſincerity among them, for which they profeſſed no ſmall veneration) likewiſe to denote the object and end of this, as of every chriſtian virtue; ſeeing whatever does not ultimately tend to God, ſinks among *the beggarly elements of the world*. By ſtyling it, the Sincerity of God, he alſo points out the Author of it, the "Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect gift deſcendeth;" which is ſtill more clearly declared in the following words, *Not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God.*

14. *Not with fleſhly wiſdom.* As if he had ſaid, We cannot thus converſe in the world, by any natural ſtrength or underſtanding, neither by any naturally-acquired knowledge or wiſdom. We cannot gain this ſimplicity, or practiſe this ſincerity, by the force either of good ſenſe, good nature, or good breeding. It overſhoots all our native courage and reſolution, as well as all our precepts of philoſophy. The power of cuſtom is not able to train us up to this, nor the moſt exquiſite rules of human education. Neither could I Paul ever attain hereto, notwithſtanding all the advantages I enjoyed, ſo long as I was *in the fleſh*, in my natural ſtate, and purſued it only by *fleſhly*, natural *wiſdom*.

And yet ſurely, if any man could, Paul himſelf might have attained thereto by that wiſdom. For we can hardly conceive any, who was more highly favoured with all the gifts both of nature and education. Beſides his natural abilities, probably not inferior to thoſe of any perſon then upon the earth, he had all the benefits of learning, ſtudying at the Univerſity of Tarſus, afterwards brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a perſon of the greateſt account both for knowledge and integrity, that was then in the whole Jewiſh nation. And he had all the

poſſible

poſſible advantages of religious education, being a phariſee, the ſon of a phariſee, trained up in the very ſtraiteſt ſect or profeſſion, diſtinguiſhed from all others by a more eminent ſtrictneſs. And herein he had *profited above many* others, *who were his equals in years, being more abundantly zealous* of whatever he thought would pleaſe God, and *as touching the righteouſneſs of the law blameleſs.* But it could not be, that he ſhould hereby attain this ſimplicity and godly ſincerity. It was all but loſt labour; in a deep, piercing ſenſe of which he was at length conſtrained to cry out, "The things which were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt: Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord," Phil. iii. 7, 8.

15. It could not be that ever he ſhould attain to this, but by the *excellent knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, our Lord: or *by the grace of God*; another expreſſion of nearly the ſame import. By *the grace of God* is ſometimes to be underſtood, that free love, that unmerited mercy, by which I a ſinner, through the merits of Chriſt, am now reconciled to God. But in this place it rather means, that power of God, the Holy Ghoſt, which *worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure.* As ſoon as ever the grace of God, in the former ſenſe, his pardoning love, is manifeſted to our ſoul; the grace of God, in the latter ſenſe, the power of his Spirit, takes place therein. And now we can perform, through God, what to man was impoſſible. Now we can order our converſation aright. We can do all things in the light and power of that love, through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth us. We now have *the teſtimony of our conſcience*, which we could never have by fleſhly wiſdom, *that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, we have our converſation in the world.*

16. This is properly the ground of a Chriſtian's joy. We may now therefore readily conceive, how

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he that hath this teſtimony in himſelf, rejoiceth evermore. "My ſoul, may he ſay, doth magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." I rejoice in him, who of his own unmerited love, of his own free and tender mercy, *hath called me into this ſtate of ſalvation*, wherein through his power I now ſtand. I rejoice becauſe his Spirit beareth witneſs to my ſpirit, that I am bought with the blood of the Lamb, and that believing in him, "I am a member of Chriſt, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." I rejoice becauſe the ſenſe of God's love to me, hath by the ſame Spirit wrought in me to love him, and to love for his ſake every child of man, every ſoul that he hath made. I rejoice, becauſe he gives me to feel in myſelf *the mind that was in Chriſt:* ſimplicity, a ſingle eye to him, in every motion of my heart; power always to fix the loving eye of my ſoul on him who "loved me and gave himſelf for me," to aim at him alone, at his glorious will, in all I think or ſpeak or do: purity, deſiring nothing more but God, "crucifying the fleſh with its affections and luſts, ſetting my affections on things above, not on things of the earth:" holineſs, a recovery of the image of God, a renewal of ſoul after his likeneſs: and godly ſincerity, directing all my words and works, ſo as to conduce to his glory. In this I likewiſe rejoice, yea and will rejoice, becauſe my conſcience beareth me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, by the light he continually pours in upon it, that I "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called: that I abſtain from all appearance of evil, fleeing from ſin as from the face of a ſerpent;" that as I have opportunity, I do all poſſible good, in every kind, to all men; that I follow my Lord in all my ſteps, and do what is acceptable in his ſight. I rejoice becauſe I both ſee and feel, through the inſpiration of God's holy Spirit, that all my works are wrought in him, yea and that it is he who worketh all my works in me. I rejoice in ſeeing,

through

through the light of God which ſhines in my heart, that I have power to walk in his ways, and that through his grace, I turn not therefrom, to the right hand or to the left.

17. Such is the ground and the nature of that joy, whereby a Chriſtian rejoiceth evermore. And from all this we may eaſily infer, Firſt, That this is not a *natural* joy. It does not ariſe from any natural cauſe: not from any ſudden flow of ſpirits. This may give a tranſient ſtart of joy. But the Chriſtian *rejoiceth always*. It cannot be owing to bodily health or eaſe; to ſtrength and ſoundneſs of conſtitution. For it is equally ſtrong in ſickneſs and pain; yea perhaps far ſtronger than before. Many Chriſtians have never experienced any joy, to be compared with that which then filled their ſoul, when the body was well nigh worn out with pain, or conſumed away with pining ſickneſs. Leaſt of all can it be aſcribed to outward proſperity, to the favour of men, or plenty of worldly goods. For then chiefly, when their faith has been tried as with fire, by all manner of outward afflictions, have the children of God rejoiced in him, whom unſeen they loved, even with joy unſpeakable. And never ſurely did men rejoice like thoſe, who were uſed as *the filth and off-ſcouring of the world*; who wandered to and fro, being in want of all things; in hunger, in cold, in nakedneſs: who had trials, not only *of cruel mockings*, but *moreover of bonds and impriſonments*: yea, who at laſt *counted not their lives dear unto themſelves, ſo* they *might finiſh their courſe with joy*.

18. From the preceding Conſiderations, we may, Secondly, infer, That the joy of a Chriſtian does not ariſe from any *blindneſs of conſcience*, from his not being able to diſcern good from evil. So far from it, that he was an utter ſtranger to this joy, till the eyes of his underſtanding were opened! That he knew it not, until he had ſpiritual ſenſes, fitted to diſcern ſpiritual good and evil. And now the

the eye of his ſoul waxeth not dim. He was never ſo ſharp-ſighted before. He has ſo quick a perception of the ſmalleſt things, as is quite amazing to the natural man. As a mote is viſible in the ſunbeam, ſo to him who is walking in the light, in the beams of the uncreated Sun, every mote of ſin is viſible. Nor does he cloſe the eyes of his conſcience any more. That ſleep is departed from him. His ſoul is always broad awake: no more ſlumber or folding of the hands to reſt! He is always ſtanding on the tower, and hearkening what his Lord will ſay concerning him: and always rejoicing in this very thing, in *ſeeing him that is inviſible.*

19. Neither does the joy of a Chriſtian ariſe, Thirdly, from any *dullneſs* or *callouſneſs of conſcience.* A kind of joy, it is true, may ariſe from this, in thoſe whoſe *fooliſh hearts are darkened*: whoſe heart is callous, unfeeling, dull of ſenſe; and conſequently without ſpiritual underſtanding. Becauſe of their ſenſeleſs, unfeeling hearts, they may rejoice even in committing ſin: And this they may probably call *Liberty!* Which is indeed mere drunkenneſs of ſoul: a fatal numbneſs of ſpirit, the ſtupid inſenſibility of a ſeared conſcience. On the contrary, a Chriſtian has the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility; ſuch as he could not have conceived before. He never had ſuch a tenderneſs of conſcience as he has had, ſince the love of God has reigned in his heart. And this alſo is his glory and joy; that God hath heard his daily prayer.

"O that my tender ſoul might fly
The firſt abhorr'd approach of ill:
Quick, as the apple of an eye,
The ſlighteſt touch of ſin to feel."

20. To conclude. Chriſtian joy, is joy in obedience: joy in loving God and keeping his commandments. And yet not in keeping them, as if we were thereby to fulfil the terms of the *covenant of works*; as if by any works or righteouſneſs of ours,

ours, we were to *procure* pardon and acceptance with God. Not ſo: we are already pardoned and accepted, through the mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus.—Not as if we were by our own obedience to *procure* life, life from the death of ſin. This alſo we have already through the grace of God. *Us hath he quickened, who were dead in ſin.* And now we are *alive to God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* But we rejoice in walking, according to the *covenant of grace*, in holy love and happy obedience. We rejoice in knowing, that *being juſtified through his grace*, we have *not received that grace of God in vain*; that God having freely (not for the ſake of our willing or running, but through the blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himſelf, we run in the ſtrength which he hath given us, the way of his commandments. He *hath girded us with ſtrength unto the war*, and we gladly *fight the good fight of faith.* We rejoice, through him who liveth in our hearts by faith, to *lay hold of eternal life.* This is our rejoicing: that as our *Father worketh hitherto*, ſo (not by our own might or wiſdom, but through the power of his Spirit freely given in Chriſt Jeſus) we alſo work the works of God. And may he work in us, whatſoever is well pleaſing in his ſight! To whom be the praiſe for ever and ever!

☞ It may eaſily be obſerved, that the preceding DISCOURSE, deſcribes the Experience of thoſe that are *ſtrong* in Faith. But hereby thoſe that are *weak* in Faith may be diſcouraged: To prevent which the following Diſcourſe may be of uſe.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

ON SIN IN BELIEVERS.

2 CORINTHIANS V. 17.

"If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature."

I. 1. IS there then ſin in him that is in Chriſt? Does ſin *remain* in one that *believes in him?* Is there any ſin in them that are *born of God*, or are they wholly delivered from it? Let no one imagine this to be a queſtion of mere curioſity: or that it is of little importance whether it be determined one way or the other. Rather it is a point of the utmoſt moment, to every ſerious Chriſtian: the reſolving of which nearly concerns both his preſent and eteral hapnpineſs.

2. And yet I do not know, that ever it was controverted in the primitive church. Indeed there was no room for diſputing concerning it, as all Chriſtians were agreed. And ſo far as I have ever obſerved, the whole body of antient Chriſtians who have left us any thing in writing, declare with one voice, that even believers in Chriſt, till they are "ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of his might," have need to "wreſtle with fleſh and blood," with an evil nature, as well as "with principalities and powers."

3. And herein our own church, (as indeed in moſt points) exactly copies after the primitive; declaring (in her ninth article) "Original ſin is the corruption of the nature of every man, whereby man is in his own nature inclined to evil, ſo that the fleſh luſteth contrary to the Spirit. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the luſt of the fleſt, called in Greek φρόνημα σαρκὸς, is not ſubject to the law of

God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, yet this luſt hath of itſelf the nature of ſin."

4. The ſame teſtimony is given by all other churches: not only by the Greek and Romiſh church, but by every reformed church in Europe, of whatever denomination. Indeed ſome of theſe ſeem to carry the thing too far: ſo deſcribing the corruption of the heart in a believer, as ſcarce to allow that he has dominion over it, but rather is in bondage thereto. And by this means they leave hardly any diſtinction, between a believer and an unbeliever.

5. To avoid this extreme, many well meaning men, particularly thoſe under the direction of the late Count Zinzendorf, ran into another; affirming, that "all true believers are not only ſaved from the *dominion* of ſin, but from the *being* of inward as well as outward ſin, ſo that it no longer *remains* in them." And from them, about twenty years ago, many of our own countrymen imbibed the ſame opinion, that even the corruption of nature *is no more*, in thoſe who believe in Chriſt.

6. It is true, that when the Germans were preſſed upon this head, they ſoon allowed, (many of them at leaſt) that "ſin did ſtill remain *in the fleſh*, but not *in the heart* of a believer." And after a time, when the abſurdity of this was ſhewn, they fairly gave up the point: allowing that ſin did ſtill *remain*, though not *reign* in him that is born of God.

7. But the Engliſh who had received it from them (ſome directly, ſome at ſecond or third hand) were not ſo eaſily prevailed upon, to part with a favourite opinion. And even when the generality of them were convinced it was utterly indefenſible, a few could not be perſuaded to give it up, but maintain it to this day.

II. 1. For the ſake of thoſe who really fear God and deſire to know the *truth as it is in Jeſus*, it may not be amiſs, to conſider the point with calmneſs

neſs and impartiality. In doing this I uſe indifferently the words *regenerate*, *juſtified*, or *believers*: ſince though they have not preciſely the ſame meaning, (the firſt implying an inward, *actual* change, the ſecond a *relative* one, and the third, the means whereby both the one and the other are wrought:) yet they come to one and the ſame thing; as every one that *believes* is both *juſtified and born of God*.

2. By ſin I here underſtand inward ſin: any ſinful temper, paſſion or affection: ſuch as pride, ſelf-will, love of the world, in any kind or degree: ſuch as luſt, anger, peeviſhneſs; any diſpoſition, contrary to the mind which was in Chriſt.

3. The queſtion is not, concerning *outward ſin*: whether a child of God *commits ſin* or no? We all agree and earneſtly maintain, "He that committeth ſin is of the devil." We agree, "Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin." Neither do we now enquire whether inward ſin will *always* remain in the children of God? Whether ſin will continue in the ſoul, *as long as* it continues in the body? Nor yet do we enquire, whether a juſtified perſon may *relapſe* either into inward or outward ſin? But ſimply this, is a juſtified or regenerate man freed from *all ſin*, *as ſoon* as he is juſtified? Is there then no ſin in his heart? Nor ever after, unleſs he fall from grace?

4. We allow that the ſtate of a juſtified perſon is inexpreſſibly great and glorious. He is "born again not of blood, nor of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God." He is a child of God, a member of Chriſt, an heir of the kingdom of heaven. "The peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, keepeth his heart and mind in Chriſt Jeſus." His very body is a "temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and a habitation of God through the Spirit." He is "created anew in Chriſt Jeſus:" he is *waſhed*, he is *ſanctified*. His heart is purified by faith: he is cleanſed "from the corruption that is in the world." "The love of God is ſhed abroad in his heart by the

Holy Ghoſt which is given unto him." And ſo long as he "walketh in love" (which he may always do) he worſhips God in ſpirit and in truth. He keepeth the commandments of God, and doth thoſe things, that are pleaſing in his ſight: ſo exerciſing himſelf as to have a conſcience void of offence, toward God and toward man." And he has power both over outward and inward ſin, even from the moment he is juſtified.

III. 1. But was he not then *freed from all ſin*, ſo that there is no ſin in his heart? I cannot ſay this: I cannot believe it: becauſe St. Paul ſays the contrary. He is ſpeaking to believers, and deſcribing the ſtate of believers in general, when he ſays, "The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh: theſe are contrary the one to the other." Gal. v. 17. Nothing can be more expreſs. The apoſtle here directly affirms, that the fleſh, evil nature, oppoſes the Spirit, even in believers; that even in the regenerate, there are two principles, *contrary the one to the other*.

2. Again. When he writes to the believers at Corinth, to thoſe who were *ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 Cor. i. 2, he ſays, "I brethren, could not ſpeak unto you, as unto ſpiritual but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Chriſt—Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and ſtrife, are ye not carnal? ch. iii. ver. 13. Now here the apoſtle ſpeaks unto thoſe who were unqueſtionably believers, whom in the ſame breath he ſtiles his *brethren* in Chriſt, as being ſtill in a meaſure carnal. He affirms, there was envying (an evil temper) occaſioning ſtrife among them, and yet does not give the leaſt invitation, that they had loſt their faith. Nay, he manifeſtly declares, they had not; for then they would not have been babes in Chriſt. And (what is moſt remarkable of all) he ſpeaks of being carnal and babes in Chriſt, as one and the ſame thing) plainly ſhewing that every believer is (in a degree) carnal, while he is only a babe in Chriſt.

3. Indeed

3. Indeed this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers, nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit, runs through all the epistles of St. Paul, yea, through all the Holy Scriptures: almost all the directions and exhortations therein, are founded on this supposition: pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those, who are notwithstanding acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and conquer these, by the power of the faith which was in them.

4. And who can doubt, but there was faith in the angel of the church of Ephesus, when our Lord said to him, "I know thy works, and thy patience: thou hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and has not fainted," Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4. But was there meantime no sin in his heart? Yea, or Christ would not have added, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." This was a real sin which God saw in his heart (of which accordingly he is exhorted to *repent*.) And yet we have no authority to say, that even then he had no faith.

5. Nay, the angel of the church at Pergamos also, is exhorted to *repent*, which implies sin, though our Lord expressly says, "Thou hast not denied my faith," ver. 13, 16. And to the angel of the church in Sardis, he says, "Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." The good which remained was *ready to die*; but was not actually dead, chap. iii. 2. So there was still a spark of faith even in him; which he is accordingly commanded to *hold fast*, ver. 3.

6. Once more. When the apostle exhorts believers to *cleanse* themselves *from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*, (2 Cor. vii. 1.) he plainly teaches, that those believers were not yet cleansed therefrom.

Will you answer, "He that *abstains from all appearance of evil*, does *ipso facto* cleanse himself from all filthiness." Not in any wise. For in-

ſtance: a man reviles me; I feel reſentment, which is *filthineſs of ſpirit.* Yet I ſay not a word. Here I *abſtain from all appearance of evil.* But this does not cleanſe me from that filthineſs of ſpirit, as I experience to my ſorrow.

7. And as this poſition, there is no ſin in a believer, no carnal mind, no bent to backſliding, is thus contrary to the word of God, ſo it is to the *experience* of his children. Theſe continually feel a heart bent to backſliding, a natural tendency to evil; a proneneſs to depart from God, and cleave to the things of earth. They are daily ſenſible of ſin remaining in their heart, pride, ſelf-will, unbelief: and of ſin cleaving to all they ſpeak and do, even their beſt actions and holieſt duties. Yet at the ſame time they *know they are of God*; they cannot doubt of it for a moment. They *feel his Spirit* clearly *witneſſing with their ſpirit, that they are the children of God.* They *rejoice in God through Chriſt Jeſus, by whom they have now received the atonement.* So that they are equally aſſured, that ſin is in them, and that *Chriſt is in them the hope of glory.*

8. "But can Chriſt be in the ſame heart where ſin is?" Undoubtedly he can. Otherwiſe it never could be ſaved therefrom. Where the ſickneſs is, there is the phyſician,

Carrying on his work within,
Striving till he caſt out ſin.

Chriſt indeed cannot *reign*, where ſin *reigns:* neither will he *dwell* where any ſin is *allowed.* But he *is* and *dwells* in the heart of every believer, who is fighting againſt all ſin; although it be not yet purified, according to the purification of the ſanctuary.

9. It has been obſerved before, that the oppoſite doctrine, "That there is no ſin in believers," is quite *new* in the church of Chriſt: that it was never heard of for ſeventeen hundred years, never till it was diſcovered by Count Zinzendorf. I do

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not remember to have ſeen the leaſt intimation of it, either in any antient or modern writers: unleſs perhaps in ſome of the wild, ranting Antinomians. And theſe likewiſe ſay and unſay, acknowledging there is ſin *in their fleſh*, although no *ſin in their heart*. But whatever doctrine is *new* muſt be *wrong*: for the *old* religion is the only *true* one. And no doctrine can be right, unleſs it is the very ſame *which was from the beginning*.

10. One argument more againſt this new, unſcriptural doctrine, may be drawn from the dreadful conſequences of it. One ſays, "I felt anger to-day." Muſt I reply, "Then you have no faith?" Another ſays, "I know what you adviſe is good, but my will is quite averſe to it." Muſt I tell him, "Then you are an unbeliever, under the wrath and curſe of God?" What will be the natural conſequence of this? Why, if he believes what I ſay, his ſoul will not only be grieved and wounded but perhaps utterly deſtroyed: inaſmuch as he will *caſt away* that *confidence, which hath great recompence of reward*. And having caſt away his ſhield, how ſhall he *quench the fiery darts of the wicked one?* How ſhall he overcome the world? Seeing "this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. He ſtands diſarmed in the midſt of his enemies, open to all their aſſaults. What wonder then if he be utterly overthrown; if they take him captive at their will? Yea, if he fall from one wickedneſs to another, and never ſee good any more?—I cannot therefore by any means receive this aſſertion, that there is no ſin in a believer from the moment he is juſtified; firſt, Becauſe it is contrary to the whole tenor of ſcripture; ſecondly, becauſe it is contrary to the experience of the children of God. Thirdly, Becauſe it is abſolutely new, never heard of in the world till yeſterday; and laſtly, becauſe it is naturally attended with the moſt fatal conſequences; not only

grieving

grieving thoſe whom God hath not grieved; but perhaps dragging them into everlaſting perdition.

IV. 1. However, let us give a fair hearing to the chief arguments, of thoſe who endeavour to ſupport it. And it is, firſt, from ſcripture they attempt to prove, that there is no ſin in a believer. (They argue thus.) "The ſcripure, ſays, Every believer is *born of God*, is *clean*, is *holy*, is *ſanctified*; is *pure in heart*, has a new heart, is a temple of the Holy Ghoſt. Now, as *that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh*, is altogether evil, ſo *that which is born of the Spirit, is ſpirit*, is altogether good. Again; a man cannot be clean, ſanctified, holy, and at the ſame time unclean, unſanctified, unholy. He cannot be pure and impure, or have a new and an old heart together. Neither can his ſoul be unholy, while it is a temple of the Holy Ghoſt."

I have put this objection as ſtrong as poſſible, that its full weight may appear. Let us now examine it, part by part. And 1. "*That which is born of the Spirit, is ſpirit*, is altogether good." I allow the text, but not the comment. For the text affirms this, and no more, That every man who is *born of the Spirit*, is a *ſpiritual man*. He is ſo. But ſo he may be, and yet not be *altogether ſpiritual*. The Chriſtians at Corinth were *ſpiritual* men. Elſe they had been no Chriſtians at all. And yet they were not *altogether* ſpiritual. They were ſtill (in part) *carnal*. "But they were fallen from grace." St. Paul ſays no. They were even *babes in* Chriſt. 2. "But a man cannot be *clean, ſanctified, holy*, and at the ſame time *unclean, unſanctified, unholy*." Indeed he may. So the Corinthians were. *Ye are waſhed*, ſays the apoſtle, *ye are ſanctified*: namely, cleanſed from *fornication, idolatry, drunkenneſs*, and all other outward ſin, (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.) And yet at the ſame time, in another ſenſe of the word, they were *unſanctified*:

they

they were not *washed*, not inwardly *cleansed* from envy, evil-surmising, partiality. "But sure they had not a new heart and an old heart together." It is most sure, they had. For at that very time, their hearts were *truly*, yet not *entirely* renewed. Their carnal mind was nailed to the cross. Yet it was not wholly destroyed. "But could they be *unholy*, while they were *temples of the Holy Ghost?*" Yes, That they were *temples of the Holy Ghost*, is certain. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) And it is equally certain, they were, in some degree, *carnal*, that is, *unholy*.

2. "However, there is one scripture more which will put the matter out of question. "If any man be [a believer] in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are past away: behold all things are become new," 1 Cor. v. 17. Now certainly a man cannot be a *new creature* and an *old creature* at once." Yes, he may. He may be *partly renewed*, which was the very case of those at Corinth. They were doubtless *renewed in the spirit of their mind*, or they could not have been so much as *babes in Christ*. Yet they had not the whole mind which was *in Christ*, for they *envied* one another. "But it is said expressly, *Old things are past away: all things are become new.*" But we must not so interpret the apostle's words, as to make him contradict himself. And if we will make him consistent with himself, the plain meaning of the words is this. His *old judgments* concerning justification, holiness, happiness, (indeed concerning the things of God in general) is now *past away*. So are his *old desires, designs, and affections, tempers*, and *conversation*. All these are undeniably *become new*, greatly changed from what they were. And yet, though they *are new*, they are not *wholly new*. Still he feels to his sorrow and shame, remains of the *old man*, too manifest taints of his former tempers and affections, though they cannot *gain* any

advantage

advantage over him, as long as he *watches unto prayer.*

3. This whole argument, "If he is clean, he is clean," "if he is holy, he is holy;" (and twenty more expreſſions of the ſame kind may eaſily be heaped together) is really no better than playing upon words: it is the fallacy of arguing from a *particular* to a *general*; of inferring a general concluſion, from particular premiſſes. Propoſe the ſentence entire, and it runs thus: "If he is holy *at all*, he is holy *altogether*." That does not follow: every babe in Chriſt is holy, and yet not altogether ſo. He is ſaved from ſin; yet not intirely: it *remains*, though it does not *reign*. If you think it does not *remain* (in *babes* at leaſt, whatever be the caſe with *young men*, or *fathers*) you certainly have not conſidered the height and depth and length and breadth of the law of God; (even the law of love, laid down by St. Paul in the thirteenth of Corinthians) and that *every* ἀνομία diſconformity to, or deviation from this law, *is ſin*. Now, is there no diſconformity to this in the heart or life of a believer? What may be in an adult Chriſtian is another queſtion. But what a ſtranger muſt he be to human nature, who can poſſibly imagine, that this is the caſe with every babe in Chriſt?

4. "But believers *walk after the Spirit*. * Rom. viii. 1. and the Spirit of God *dwells* in them. Conſequently they are delivered from the guilt, the power, *or in one word*, the being of ſin."

Theſe are coupled together, as if they were the ſame thing. But they are not the ſame thing. The *guilt* is one thing, the *power* another, and the *being* yet another. That believers are belivered from the *guilt* and *power* of ſin we allow; that they are delivered from the *being* of it we deny. Nor does it

* What follows for ſome pages is an anſwer to a paper, publiſhed in the Chriſtian Magazine, p. 577—582. I am ſurprized Mr. Dodd, ſhould give ſuch a paper place in his Magazine, which is contrary to our ninth article.

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in any wiſe follow from theſe texts. A man may have the Spirit of God *dwelling* in him, and may *walk after the Spirit*, though he ſtill feels *the fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit*.

5. "But the *church is the body of Chriſt*, Col. i. 24. This implies, that its members are waſhed from all filthineſs. Otherwiſe it will follow, that Chriſt and Belial, are incorporated with each other."

Nay, it will not follow from hence, "thoſe who are the myſtical body of Chriſt, ſtill feel the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit," that Chriſt has any fellowſhip with the devil, or with that ſin which he enables them to reſiſt and overcome.

6. "But are not Chriſtians *come to the heavenly Jeruſalem*, where *nothing defiled can enter?*" Heb. xii. 22. Yes! "and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect:" that is,

Earth and heaven all agree;
All is one great family.

And they are likewiſe holy and *undefiled*, while they *walk after the Spirit:* although ſenſible, there is another principle in them, and that "theſe are contrary to each other."

7. "But Chriſtians are *reconciled to God*. Now this could not be, if any of the *carnal mind* remained: for this is enmity againſt God. Conſequently no reconciliation can be effected, but by its total deſtruction."

We "are reconciled to God through the blood of the croſs." And in the moment, the φρόνημα σαρκὸς, the corruption of nature, which is *enmity with God*, is put under our feet, the fleſh has *no more dominion* over us. But it ſtill *exiſts:* and it is ſtill in its nature enmity with God, luſting againſt his Spirit.

8. "But *they that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh, with its affections and luſts.*" Gal. v. 24. They have ſo: yet it remains in them ſtill, and often ſtruggles to break from the croſs. "Nay,

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but they have *put off the old man with his deeds.*" Col. iii. 9. They have: and in the ſenſe above deſcribed, "all things are paſſed away; all things are become new." A hundred texts may be cited to the ſame effect. And they will all admit of the ſame anſwer. "But to ſay all in one word, *Chriſt gave himſelf for the church, that it might be holy, and without blemiſh,*" Eph. v. 25. 27. And ſo will it be in the end: but it never was yet, from the beginning to this day.

9. "But let experience ſpeak. All who are juſtified do at that time find an abſolute freedom from all ſin." That I doubt: but if they do, do they find it ever after? Elſe you gain nothing. "If they do not, it is their own fault." That remains to be proved.

10. "But in the very nature of things, can a man have pride in him, and not be proud? Anger, and yet not be angry?"

A man may have *pride* in him, may think himſelf in *ſome particulars* above what he ought to think, (and ſo be proud in that particular) and yet not be a proud man in his general character. He may have *anger* in him, yea and a ſtrong propenſity to furious anger, without *giving way* to it. "But can anger and pride, be in that heart, where *only* meekneſs and humility are felt!" No: but *ſome* pride and anger may be in that heart, where there is much humility and meekneſs.

"It avails not to ſay, Theſe tempers are there, but they do not *reign*. For ſin cannot, in any kind or degree exiſt where it does not reign. For *guilt* and *power* are eſſential properties of ſin. Therefore where one of them is, all muſt be."

Strange indeed! "Sin cannot in any kind or degree *exiſt* where it does not *reign*." Abſolutely contrary this to all experience, all ſcripture, all common ſenſe. Reſentment of an affront is ſin. it is ἀνομία, diſconformity to the law of love. This has exiſted in me a thouſand times. Yet it did

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not, and does not *reign*. "But *guilt* and *power* are essential properties of sin: therefore where one is, all must be." No. In the instance before us, if the resentment I feel is not yielded to, even for a moment, there is no guilt at all, no condemnation from God upon that account. And in this case, it has no *power*: though it *lusteth against the Spirit*, it cannot prevail. Here therefore, as in ten thousand instances, there is *sin* without either *guilt* or *power*.

11. "But the supposing sin in a believer is pregnant with every thing frightful and discouraging. It implies the contending with a power, that has the possession of our strength, maintains his usurpation of our hearts, and there prosecutes the war in defiance of our Redeemer." Not so. The supposing sin is in us, does not imply, that it has the possession of our strength. No more than a man crucified has the possession of those that crucify him. As little does it imply, That "sin maintains its usurpation of our hearts." The usurper is dethroned. He remains indeed where he once reigned; but remains *in chains*. So that he does in some sense "prosecute the war," yet he grows weaker and weaker: while the believer goes on from strength to strength, conquering and to conquer.

12. "I am not satisfied yet. He that has sin in him, is a slave to sin. Therefore you suppose a man to be justified, while he is a slave to sin. Now if you allow, men may be justified while they have pride, anger, or unbelief in them; nay if you aver, These are (at least, for a time) in all that are justified: what wonder that we have so many proud, angry, unbelieving believers?"

I do not suppose any man who is justified, is a slave to sin. Yet I do suppose, sin remains (at least for a time) in all that are justified. "But if sin remains in a believer, he is a sinful man: if pride, for instance, then he is proud: if self will, then he is self-willed; if unbelief, then he is an

unbeliever; conſequently, no believer at all. How then does he differ from unbelievers, from unregenerate men?"

This is ſtill mere playing upon words. It means no more, than, if there is ſin, pride, ſelf-will in him, then—there is ſin, pride, ſelf-will. And this no body can deny. In that ſenſe then he is proud, or ſelf-willed. But he is not proud or ſelf-willed in the ſame ſenſe that unbelievers are, that is, *governed* by pride or ſelf-will. Herein he differs from unregenerate men. They *obey* ſin, he does not. Fleſh is in them both. But they *walk after the fleſh:* he *walks after the ſpirit.*

"But how can *unbelief* be in a believer?" That word has two meanings. It means either no faith, or little faith; either the *abſence* of faith, or the *weakneſs* of it. In the former ſenſe, unbelief is not in a believer: in the latter, it is in all babes. Their faith is commonly mixt with doubt or fear, that is (in the latter ſenſe) with unbelief. "Why are ye fearful, ſays our Lord, O ye of little faith." Again, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?" You ſee here was *unbelief* in *believers:* little faith and much unbelief.

13. "But this doctrine, That ſin remains in a believer: That a man may be in the favour of God, while he has ſin in his heart, certainly tends to encourage men in ſin." Underſtand the propoſition right, and no ſuch conſequence follows. A man may be in God's favour though he feel ſin; but not if he *yields* to it. *Having ſin* does not forfeit the favour of God; *giving way to ſin* does. Though the fleſh in *you luſt againſt the Spirit*, you may ſtill be a child of God. But if you *walk after the fleſh*, you are a child of the devil. Now this doctrine does not encourage to *obey* ſin, but to reſiſt it with all your might.

V. 1. The ſum of all is this. There are in every perſon, even after he is juſtified, two contrary principles, nature and grace, termed by St. Paul, the *fleſh* and the *Spirit.* Hence although even babes

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in Chriſt are *ſanctified*, yet it is only in part. In a degree, according to the meaſure of their faith, they are ſpiritual: yet in a degree they are carnal. Accordingly, believers are continually exhorted to watch againſt the fleſh, as well as the world and the devil. And to this agrees the conſtant experience of the children of God. While they feel this witneſs in themſelves, they feel a will not wholly reſigned to the will of God. They know they are in him, and yet find a heart ready to depart from him, a proneneſs to evil in many inſtances, and a backwardneſs to that which is good. The contrary doctrine is wholly new: never heard of in the church of Chriſt, from the time of his coming into the world, till the time of Count Zinzendorf. And it is attended with the moſt fatal conſequences. It cuts off all watching againſt our evil nature, againſt the Delilah, which we are told is gone, though ſhe is ſtill lying in our boſom. It tears away the ſhield of weak believers, deprives them of their faith, and ſo leaves them expoſed to all the aſſaults of the world, the fleſh, and the devil.

2. Let us therefore hold faſt the ſound doctrine "once delivered to the ſaints," and delivered down by them with the written word to all ſucceeding generations: that although we are renewed, cleanſed, purified, ſanctified, the moment we truly believe in Chriſt, yet we are not then renewed, cleanſed, purified altogether: but the fleſh, the evil nature ſtill *remains* (though ſubdued) and wars *againſt* the Spirit. So much the more, let us uſe all diligence in "fighting the good fight of faith." So much the more earneſtly let us *watch and pray*, againſt the enemy within. The more carefully let us *take* to ourſelves, and "put on the whole armour of God:" that although "we wreſtle" both "with fleſh and blood, and with principalities and powers, and wicked ſpirits in high places," we may be able to withſtand in the evil day, and having done all, to ſtand."

SERMON XIV.

The REPENTANCE of BELIEVERS.

MARK I. 15.

"Repent, and believe the Goſpel."

1. IT is generally ſuppoſed, That Repentance and Faith are only the Gate of Religion; that they are neceſſary only at the beginning of our Chriſtian Courſe, when we are ſetting out in the way to the kingdom. And this may ſeem to be confirmed by the great Apoſtle, where exhorting the Hebrew Chriſtians to *go on to perfection*, he teaches them to *leave* theſe *firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt*; "not laying again the foundation of repentance from death works, and faith toward God:" which muſt at leaſt mean, that they ſhould comparatively leave theſe, that at firſt took up all their thoughts, in order to "preſs forward toward the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus."

2. And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a Repentance and a Faith, which are more eſpecially neceſſary at the beginning. A Repentance which is a conviction of our utter ſinfulneſs, and guiltineſs, and helpleſſneſs: and which precedes our receiving that kingdom of God, which our Lord obſerves is *within us*; and a Faith, whereby we receive that kingdom, even *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*."

3. But notwithſtanding this, there is alſo a Repentance and a Faith, (taking the words in another ſenſe, a ſenſe not quite the ſame, nor yet entirely different,)

different,) which are requiſite after we have *believed the goſpel:* yea, and every ſubſequent ſtage of our Chriſtian courſe, or we cannot *run the race which is ſet before us.* And this Repentance and Faith are full as neceſſary in order to our continuance and growth in grace, as the former Faith and Repentance were in order to our entering into the Kingdom of God.

But in what ſenſe are we to repent and believe, after we are juſtified? This is an important queſtion, and worthy of being conſidered with the utmoſt attention.

I. And firſt, in what ſenſe are we to repent?

1. Repentance frequently means, an inward change, a change of mind from ſin to holineſs. But we now ſpeak of it in quite a different ſenſe, as it is one kind of Self-knowledge, the knowing ourſelves ſinners, even though we know we are children of God.

2. Indeed when we firſt know this, when we firſt find redemption thro' the blood of Jeſus, when the Love of God is firſt ſhed abroad in our hearts, and his kingdom ſet up therein, it is natural to ſuppoſe that we are no longer ſinners, that all our ſins are not only covered but deſtroyed. As we do not then feel any evil in our hearts, we readily imagine, none is there. Nay ſome well-meaning men have imagined this, not only at that time, but ever after: having perſuaded themſelves, that when they were juſtified, they were entirely ſanctified. Yea, they have laid it down as a general rule, in ſpite of Scripture, Reaſon and Experience. Theſe ſincerely believe and earneſtly maintain, that all ſin is deſtroyed when we are juſtified, and that there is no ſin in the heart of a believer, but that it is altogether clear from that moment. But though we readily acknowledge, "he that believeth is born of God, and he that is born of God doth not commit ſin:" yet we cannot allow that he does

not *feel* it within: it does not *reign*, but it does remain. And a conviction of the ſin which *remains* in our heart, is one great branch of the Repentance we are now ſpeaking of.

3. For it is ſeldom long, before he who imagined all ſin was gone, feels there is ſtill *Pride* in his heart. He is convinced both that in many reſpects he has thought of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, and that he has taken to himſelf the praiſe of ſomething he had received, and glorified in it as though he had not received it. And yet he knows, he is in the favour of God. He cannot and ought not to *caſt away* his *confidence*. *The Spirit* ſtill *witneſſes with* his *ſpirit, that he is a child of God*.

4. Nor is it long before he feels *Self-will* in his heart, even a Will contrary to the Will of God. A Will every man muſt inevitably have, as long as he has an Underſtanding. This is an eſſential part of human Nature, indeed of the nature of every intelligent Being. Our bleſſed Lord himſelf had a Will as a man: otherwiſe he had not been a man. But his human Will was invariably ſubject to the Will of his Father. At all times, and on all occaſions, even in the deepeſt affliction, he could ſay, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." But this is not the caſe at all times, even with a true believer in Chriſt. He frequently finds his will more or leſs exalting itſelf againſt the Will of God. He wills ſomething becauſe it is pleaſing to nature, which is not pleaſing to God. And he wills (is averſe from) ſomething, becauſe it is painful to nature, which is the will of God concerning him. (Indeed) ſuppoſe he continues in the faith) he fights againſt it with all his might. But this very things implies, that it really exiſts, and that he is conſcious of it.

5. Now Self-will, as well as Pride, is a ſpecies of Idolatry; and both are directly contrary to the love of God. The ſame obſervation may be made,

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concerning *the Love of the world*. But this likewise even true believers are liable to feel in themselves: and every one of them does feel it, more or less, sooner or later, in one branch or another. It is true, when he first passes from death unto life, he desires nothing more but God. He can truly say, "All my desire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!" But it is not so always. In process of time he will feel again, (though perhaps only for a few moments) either "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life." Nay, if he does not continually watch and pray, he may find *Lust* reviving; yea, and thrusting sore at him that he may fall, till he has scarce any strength left in him. He may feel the assaults of *inordinate Affection*, yea a strong propensity to "love the creature more than the Creator:" whether it be a child, a parent, a husband or wife, or "the Friend that is as his own soul." He may feel in a thousand various ways, a desire of earthly things or pleasures. In the same proportion he will forget God, not seeking his happiness in him, and consequently being a "lover of pleasure more than a lover of God."

6. If he does not keep himself every moment, he will again feel *the Desire of the Eye*, the desire of gratifying his imagination, with something great, or beautiful, or uncommon. In how many ways does this desire assault the soul? Perhaps with regard to the poorest trifles, such as dress, or furniture: things never designed to satisfy the appetite of an immortal Spirit. Yet how natural is it for us, even after we have "tasted of the powers of the world to come," to sink again into these foolish, low desires, of things that perish in the using? How hard is it, even for those who know in whom they have believed, to conquer but one branch of the desire of the eye, Curiosity? Constantly to trample

trample it under their feet? To desire nothing, merely because it is new?

7. And how hard is it even for the children of God wholly to conquer *the pride of life?* St. John seems to mean by this, nearly the same with what the world terms the *sense of honour*. This is no other than a desire of and the delight in "the honour that cometh of men." A desire and love of praise, and (which is always joined with it) a proportionable *fear of dispraise*. Nearly allied to this is *evil shame*: the being ashamed of that wherein we ought to glory. And this is seldom divided from the *fear of man*, which brings a thousand snares upon the soul. Now where is he even among those that seem strong in faith, who does not find in himself a degree of all these evil tempers? So that even these are but in part *crucified to the world*: for the evil root still remains in their heart.

8. And do we not feel other tempers, which are as contrary to the love of our neighbour, as these are to the love of God? The love of our neighbour, *thinketh no evil*: Do not we find any thing of the kind? Do we never find any *jealousies*, any *evil surmisings*, any groundless or unreasonable suspicions? He that is clear in these respects let him cast the first stone at his neighbour. Who does not sometimes feel other tempers or inward motions, which he knows are contrary to brotherly love? If nothing of *malice*, *hatred*, or *bitterness*, is there no touch of *envy*? Particularly toward those who enjoy some (real or supposed) good, which we desire but cannot attain? Do we never find any degree of *resentment*, when we are injured or affronted? Especially by those whom we peculiarly loved, and whom we had most laboured to help or oblige. Does injustice or ingratitude never excite us to any desire of *revenge*? Any desire of returning evil for evil, instead of *overcoming evil with good*?

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This alſo ſhews, how much is ſtill in our heart, which is contrary to the love of our neighbour.

9. *Covetouſneſs* in every kind and degree is certainly as contrary to this as to the love of God. Whether φιλαργυρία, *the love of money*, which is too frequently *the root of all evils*, or πλεονεξία, literally, *A deſire of having more*, or increaſing in ſubſtance. And how few even of the real children of God, are entirely free from both? Indeed one great man, Martin Luther uſed to ſay, He "never had any covetouſneſs in him, (not only in his converted ſtate, but) ever ſince he was born." But if ſo, I would not ſcruple to ſay, He was the only man born of a woman, (except him that was God as well as man) who had not, who was born without it. Nay, I believe, never was any born of God, that lived any conſiderable time after, who did not feel more or leſs of it many times, eſpecially in the latter ſenſe. We may therefore ſet it down as an undoubted truth, that *covetouſneſs*, together with pride, and ſelf-will, and anger, *remain* in the hearts even of them that are juſtified.

10. It is their experiencing this which has inclined ſo many ſerious perſons, to underſtand the latter part of the ſeventh chapter to the Romans, not of them that *are under the law*, that are convinced of ſin, which is undoubtedly the meaning of the Apoſtle, but of them that *are under grace*, that are "juſtified freely through the redemption that is in Chriſt." And it is moſt certain, they are thus far right: there does ſtill *remain* even in them that are juſtified, a *mind* which is in ſome meaſure *carnal*; (ſo the Apoſtle tells even the believers at Corinth, *Ye are carnal:*) an *heart bent to backſliding*, ſtill ever ready to *depart from the living God*; a propenſity to pride, ſelf-will, anger, revenge, love of the world, yea and all evil; a root of bitterneſs, which if the reſtraint were taken off for a moment, would inſtantly ſpring up: Yea, ſuch a depth of corruption, as without clear light

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from God we cannot poſſibly conceive. And a conviction of all this ſin *remaining* in their hearts, is the repentance which belongs to them that are juſtified.

11. But we ſhould likewiſe be convinced, that as ſin remains in our hearts, ſo it *cleaves* to all our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared, that many of our words are more than mixt with ſin; that they are all ſinful altogether; for ſuch undoubtedly is all *uncharitable converſation*; all which does not ſpring from brotherly love: all which does not agree with that golden rule, "What ye would that others ſhould do to you, even ſo do unto them." Of this kind is all back-biting, all tale-bearing, all whiſpering, all evil-ſpeaking; that is, repeating the faults of abſent perſons: For none would have others repeat his faults when he is abſent. Now how few are there, even among believers, who are in no degree guilty of this? Who ſteadily obſerve the good old rule, "Of the dead and the abſent ſpeak nothing but good." And ſuppoſe they do, do they likewiſe abſtain from *unprofitable converſation?* Yet all this is unqueſtionably ſinful, and *grieves the holy Spirit of God*; yea, and "for every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account in the day of judgment."

12. But let it be ſuppoſed, that they continually *watch and pray*, and ſo do *not enter into this temptation*; that they conſtantly ſet a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips: ſuppoſe they exerciſe themſelves herein, that all their "converſation may be in grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, and meet to miniſter grace to the hearers;" yet do they not daily ſlide into uſeleſs diſcourſe, notwithſtanding all their caution? And even when they endeavour to ſpeak for God, are their words pure, free from unholy mixtures? Do they find nothing wrong in their very *Intention?* Do they ſpeak merely to pleaſe God, and not partly to pleaſe them-

themſelves? Is it wholly to do the will of God, and not their own will alſo? Or, if they begin with a ſingle eye, do they go on *looking unto Jeſus*, and talking with him all the time they are with their neighbour?" When they are reproving ſin, do they feel no anger or unkind temper to the ſinner? When they are inſtructing the ignorant, do they not find any pride, any ſelf-preference? When they are comforting the afflicted, or provoking one another to love and to good works, do they never perceive any inward ſelf-commendation, "Now you have ſpoke well?" Or any vanity, a deſire that others ſhould think ſo, and eſteem them on the account? In ſome or all theſe reſpects, how much ſin *cleaves* to the beſt converſation even of believers? The conviction of which is another branch of repentance which belongs to them that are juſtified.

13 And how much ſin, if their conſcience is thoroughly awake, may they find *cleaving to their actions* alſo? Nay, are there not many of theſe, which though they are ſuch as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no nor excuſed, if we judge by the word of God? Are there not many of their actions, which they themſelves know, are not *to the glory of God?* Many, wherein they did no even aim at this, which were not undertaken with an eye to God? And of thoſe that were, are there not many, wherein their eye is not ſingly fixt on God? Wherein they are doing their own will, at leaſt as much as his, and ſeeking to pleaſe themſelves as much, if not more, than to pleaſe God? And while they are endeavouring to do good to their neighbour, do they not feel wrong tempers of various kinds? Hence their good actions, ſo called, are far from being ſtrictly ſuch, being polluted with ſuch a mixture of evil! Such are their works of *mercy!* And is there not the ſame mixture in their works of *piety?* While they are hearing the word which is able to ſave

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their ſouls, do they not frequently find ſuch thoughts, as make them afraid, leſt it ſhould turn to their condemnation, rather than their ſalvation? Is it not often the ſame caſe, while they are endeavouring to offer up their prayers to God, whether in public or private? Nay, while they are engaged in the moſt ſolemn ſervice: even while they are at the table of the Lord, what manner of thoughts ariſe in them? Are not their hearts ſometimes wandering to the ends of the earth, ſometimes filled with ſuch imaginations, as make them fear, leſt all their ſacrifice ſhould be an abomination to the Lord. So that they are more aſhamed of their beſt duties, than they were once of their worſt ſins.

14. Again. How many *ſins of omiſſion* are they chargeable with? We know the words of the apoſtle, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin." But do they not know a thouſand inſtances, wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to ſtrangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their ſouls, and they did it not? How many omiſſions have they been guilty of, in their duty towards God? How many opportunities of communicating, of hearing his word, of public or private prayer, have they neglected? So great reaſon had even that holy man biſhop Uſher, after all his labours for God, to cry out, almoſt with his dying breath, "Lord, forgive me my ſins of omiſſion."

15. But beſides theſe outward omiſſions, may they not find in themſelves *inward defects* without number? Defects of every kind: They have not the love, the fear, the confidence, they ought to have toward God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbour, to every child of man: No, nor even that which is due to their brethren, to every child of God; whether thoſe that are at a diſtance from them, or thoſe with whom they are immediately connected. They have no holy temper in the degree they ought; they are defective in

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every thing: In a deep conſcioufneſs of which they are ready to cry out with Mr. De Renty, "I am a ground all over-run with thorns:" or with Job, "I am vile; I abhor myſelf, and repent as in duſt and aſhes."

16. A conviction of their *guiltineſs*, is another branch of that repentance which belongs to the children of God. But this is cautiouſly to be underſtood, and in a peculiar ſenſe. For it is certain, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus;" that believe in him, and in the power of that faith, "walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit." Yet can they no more bear the *ſtrict juſtice* of God now, than before they believed. This pronounces them to be ſtill *worthy of death*, on all the preceding accounts. And it would abſolutely condemn them thereto, were it not for the atoning blood. Therefore they are thoroughly convinced, that they ſtill *deſerve* puniſhment, although it is hereby turned aſide from them. But here there are extremes on one hand and on the other, and few ſteer clear of them. Moſt men ſtrike on one or the other, either thinking themſelves condemned, when they are not, or thinking they *deſerve* to be acquitted. Nay, the truth lies between; they ſtill *deſerve*, ſtrictly ſpeaking, only the damnation of hell. But what they deſerve does not come upon them, becauſe they "have an advocate with the Father." His life, and death, and interceſſion, ſtill interpoſe between them and condemnation.

17. A conviction of their *utter helpleſſneſs*, is yet another branch of this repentance. I mean hereby two things: 1. That they are no more able now *of themſelves* to think one good thought, to form one good deſire, to ſpeak one good word, or do one good work, than before they were juſtified: that they ſtill have no kind or degree of ſtrength *of their own*; no power either to do good or reſiſt evil; no ability to conquer or even withſtand,

the world, the devil, or their own evil nature. They *can*, it is certain, *do all* theſe *things*; but it is not by *their own ſtrength*. They have power to overcome all theſe enemies; for *ſin hath no more dominion over* them. But it is not from nature, either in whole or in part: *it is the* mere *gift of God*; nor is it given all at once, as if they had a ſtock laid up for many years; but from moment to moment.

18. By this helpleſſneſs I mean, Secondly, An abſolute inability to deliver ourſelves, from that guiltineſs or deſert of puniſhment whereof we are ſtill conſcious: Yea, and an inability to remove, by all the grace we have, (to ſay nothing of our natural powers) either the pride, ſelf-will, love of the world, anger, and general proneneſs to *depart from God*, which we experimentally know to *remain* in the heart, even of them that are regenerate; or the evil which in ſpite of all our endeavours, *cleaves* to all our words and actions. Add to this, an utter inability wholly to avoid *uncharitable*, and much more, *unprofitable converſation*: and an inability to avoid *Sins of Omiſſion*, or to ſupply the numberleſs *defects* we are convinced of, eſpecially the want of Love and other right tempers, both to God and man.

19. If any man is not ſatisfied of this, if any believes that whoever is juſtified, is able to remove theſe ſins out of his heart and life, let him make the experiment. Let him try, whether by the grace he has already received, he can expel Pride, Self-will, or inbred Sin in general. Let him try, whether he can cleanſe his words and actions from all mixtures of evil: Whether he can avoid all uncharitable and unprofitable converſation, with all the ſins of omiſſion: and laſtly, whether he can ſupply the numberleſs defects which he ſtill finds in himſelf. Let him not be diſcouraged by one or two experiments, but repeat the trial again and again. And the longer he tries, the more deeply

will

will he be convinced of his utter helpleſſneſs in all theſe reſpects.

20. Indeed this is ſo evident a truth, that well nigh all the children of God ſcattered abroad, however they differ in other points, yet generally agree in this, that although we may, *by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body*, reſiſt and conquer both outward and inward ſin, although we may *weaken* our enemies day by day, yet we cannot *drive them out*. By all the grace which is given at juſtification, we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever ſo much, we cannot wholly cleanſe either our hearts or hands. Moſt ſure we cannot, till it ſhall pleaſe our Lord, to ſpeak to our hearts again, to "ſpeak the ſecond time, *Be clean*." And then only *the leproſy is cleanſed*. Then only the evil root, the carnal mind, is deſtroyed, and inbred ſin ſubſiſts no more. But if there be no ſuch ſecond Change, if there be no inſtantaneous Deliverance after Juſtification, if there be *none but* a gradual work of God (that there is a gradual work none denies,) then we muſt be content as well as we can, to remain full of ſin till death. And if ſo, we muſt remain *guilty* till death, continually *deſerving* puniſhment. For it is impoſſible, the guilt or deſert of puniſhment ſhould be removed from us, as long as all this ſin remains in our hearts, and cleaves to our words and actions. Nay, in rigorous Juſtice, all we think, and ſpeak, and act, continually increaſes it.

II. 1. In this ſenſe we are to *repent*, after we are juſtified. And till we do ſo, we can go no farther. For till we are ſenſible of our diſeaſe it admits of no cure. But ſuppoſing we do thus repent, then are we called to *believe the goſpel*.

2. And this alſo is to be underſtood in a peculiar ſenſe, different from that, wherein we believe in order to Juſtification. Believe the glad tidings of that great Salvation, which God hath prepared for all people. Believe that he who is "the brightneſs of his Father's

glory, the expreſs image of his perſon, is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God through him." He is able to ſave you from all the ſin that ſtill remains in your heart. He is able to ſave you from all the ſin that cleaves to all your words and actions. He is able to ſave you from ſins of Omiſſion, and to ſupply whatever is wanting in you. It is true *this is impoſſible with man; but with God*-Man *all things are poſſible.* For what can be too hard for Him, who hath *all power in heaven and in earth?* Indeed his bare power, to do this, is not a ſufficient foundation for our faith, that he will do it, that he will thus exert his power, unleſs he hath promiſed it. But this he has done: he has promiſed it over and over, in the ſtrongeſt terms. He has given us theſe *exceeding great and precious promiſes*, both in the Old and the New Teſtament. So we read in the Law, in the moſt ancient part of the Oracles of God, "The Lord thy God will circumciſe thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul," Deut. xxx. 6. So in the Pſalms, "He ſhall redeem Iſrael (the Iſrael of God) from all his ſins." So in the Prophet: "Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs and from all your idols will I cleanſe you—And I will put my Spirit within you, and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them. I will alſo ſave you from all your uncleanneſſes," Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. So likewiſe in the New Teſtament; "Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his people. And hath raiſed up an horn of Salvation for us:—to perform the oath which he ſwore to our father Abraham. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, ſhould ſerve him without fear, In holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life," Luke i. 68. &c.

3. You have therefore good reaſon to believe, he is not only able, but *willing* to do this, to "cleanſe you from

from all your filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit; to ſave you from all your uncleanneſſes." This is the thing which you now long for; this is the faith which you particularly need, namely, that the great phyſician, the lover of my ſoul, is willing to *make me clean*. But is he willing to do this to-morrow or to-day? Let him anſwer for himſelf, "To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts:" If you put it off till to-morrow, you harden your hearts; you refuſe to *hear his voice*. Believe, therefore, that he is willing to ſave you to-day. He is willing to ſave you now. "Behold, now is the accepted time." He now ſaith, *Be thou clean!* Only believe; and you alſo will immediately find, "All things are poſſible to him that believeth."

4. Continue to believe in him "that loved thee, and gave himſelf for thee, that bore all thy ſins in his own body on the tree," and he ſaveth thee from all condemnation, by his blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a juſtified ſtate. And when we go on *from faith to faith*, when we have faith to be cleanſed from indwelling ſin, to be ſaved from all our uncleanneſſes, we are likewiſe ſaved from all that *guilt*, that *deſert* of puniſhment, which we felt before. So that then we may ſay not only,

Every moment, Lord, I *want*
The merit of thy Death:—

but likewiſe, in the full aſſurance of faith,

Every moment, Lord, I *have*
The merit of thy Death!

For by that faith in his Life, Death, and Interceſſion for us, renewed from moment, to moment, we are every whit clean; and there is not only now no condemnation for us, but no ſuch deſert of puniſhment as was before, the Lord cleanſing both our hearts and lives.

5. By the ſame Faith, we feel the power of Chriſt every moment reſting upon us, whereby alone we

are what we are: whereby we are enabled to continue in ſpiritual life, and without which, notwithſtanding all our preſent holineſs, we ſhould be devils the next moment. But as long as we retain our Faith in him, we "draw water out of the wells of Salvation." Leaning on our Beloved, even Chriſt in us the hope of glory, who dwelleth in our hearts by faith, who likewiſe is ever interceding for us at the right-hand of God, we receive help from him, to think, and ſpeak, and act, what is acceptable in his ſight. Thus does he "prevent them that believe in all their doings, and further them with his continual help, ſo that all their deſigns, converſations and actions are begun, continued, and ended in him." Thus doth he "cleanſe the thoughts of their hearts, by the inſpiration of his Holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

6. Thus it is, that in the children of God, Repentance and Faith exactly anſwer each other. By Repentance we feel the ſin remaining in our hearts and cleaving to our words and actions. By faith we receive the power of God in Chriſt, purifying our hearts and cleanſing our hands. By Repentance we are ſtill ſenſible that we deſerve puniſhment for all our tempers and words and actions. By faith we are conſcious, that our Advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aſide all condemnation and puniſhment from us. By Repentance we have an abiding conviction, that there is no help in us. By faith we receive not only mercy, but *grace to help* in every *time of need*. Repentance diſclaims the very poſſibility of any other help. Faith accepts all the help we ſtand in need of, from Him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance ſays, Without him I can do nothing: Faith ſays, "I can do all things thro' Chriſt ſtrengthening me." Through him I can not only overcome, but expel all the enemies of my ſoul. Through him I can "love

the

the Lord my God, with all my heart, mind, ſoul and ſtrength: yea, and walk in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of my life."

III. 1. From what has been ſaid, we may eaſily learn the miſchievouſneſs of that opinion, that we are *wholly* ſanctified when we are juſtified: that our hearts are then cleanſed from all ſin. It is true, we are then delivered (as was obſerved before) from the dominion of outward ſin: and at the ſame time the power of inward ſin is ſo broken, that we need no longer follow or be led by it. But it is by no means true, that inward ſin is then totally deſtroyed, that the root of pride, ſelf-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart, or that the carnal mind and the heart bent to backſliding are entirely extirpated. And to ſuppoſe the contrary, is not, as ſome may think, an innocent, harmleſs miſtake. No: It does immenſe harm: it entirely blocks up the way to any farther change. For it is manifeſt, "They that are whole do not need a phyſician, but they that are ſick. If therefore we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to ſeek any farther healing. On this ſuppoſition, it is abſurd to expect a farther deliverance from ſin, whether gradual or inſtantaneous.

2. On the contrary, a deep conviction that we are not yet whole, that our hearts are not fully purified, that there is yet in us a *carnal mind*, which is ſtill in its nature *enmity againſt God*; that a whole body of ſin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not deſtroyed, ſhews beyond all poſſibility of doubt, the abſolute neceſſity of a farther change. We allow, that at the very moment of juſtification, we are *born again*: in that inſtant we experience that inward change, from darkneſs into marvellous light; from the image of the brute and the devil, into the image of God; from the earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh mind, to the mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus. But are we then *entirely* changed? Are we

wholly

wholly transformed into the image of him that created us? Far from it: We ſtill retain a depth of ſin: And it is the conſciouſneſs of this, which conſtrains us to groan for a full deliverance, to him that is mighty to ſave. Hence it is, that thoſe believers who are not convinced of the deep corruptions of their hearts, or but ſlightly, and as it were notionally convinced, have little concern about *entire Sanctification*. They may poſſibly hold the opinion, that ſuch a thing is to be, either at death, or ſome time, they know not when, before it. But they have no great uneaſineſs for the want of it, and no great hunger or thirſt after it. They cannot, until they know themſelves better, until they repent in the ſenſe above deſcribed, until God unveils the inbred monſter's face, and ſhews them the real ſtate of their ſouls. Then only, when they feel the burden, will they groan for deliverance from it. Then and not till then, will they cry out, in the agony of their ſoul,

Break off the yoke of inbred ſin
And fully ſet my ſpirit free!
I cannot reſt, till pure within,
Till I am wholly loſt in thee!

3. We may learn from hence, ſecondly, that a deep conviction of our *Demerit* after we are accepted, (which in one ſenſe may be termed *guilt*) is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to our ſeeing the true value of the atoning Blood; in order to our feeling that we need this as much, after we are juſtified, as ever we did before. Without this conviction, we cannot but account the blood of the Covenant *as a common thing*, ſomething of which we have not now any great need, ſeeing all our paſt ſins are blotted out. Yea, but if both our hearts and lives are thus unclean, there is a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which of conſequence, would every moment expoſe us to freſh condemnation, but that

He

He ever lives above,
For us to intercede,
His all-atoning blood
His precious death to plead.

4. We may obſerve, thirdly, a deep conviction of our utter *helpleſſneſs*, of our total inability to retain any thing we have received, much more to deliver ourſelves from the world of iniquity remaining both in our hearts and lives, teaches us truly to live upon Chriſt by faith, not only as our Prieſt, but as our King. Hereby we are brought to "magnify him," indeed to "give him all the glory of his grace," to "make him a whole Chriſt, an entire Saviour," and truly to "ſet the crown upon his head." Theſe excellent words, as they have been frequently uſed, have little or no meaning. But they are fulfilled in a ſtrong and deep ſenſe, when we thus go out of ourſelves, in order to be ſwallowed up in him; when we ſink into nothing, that he may be all in all. Then his almighty grace, having aboliſhed *every high thing which exalted itſelf againſt* him, every temper, and thought, and word, and work, is *brought to the obedience of Chriſt*.

LONDONDERRY,

April 24, 1767.

SERMON

SERMON XV.

THE GREAT ASSIZE.

PREACHED

At the ASSIZES held before the Honourable Sir EDWARD CLIVE, Knight, one of the Judges of his MAJESTY'S Court of Common-Pleas, in St. PAUL'S Church, BEDFORD: on Friday March 10, 1758.

ROMANS XIV. 10.

"We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of "Chriſt."

1. HOW many circumſtances concur, to raiſe the awfulneſs of the preſent ſolemnity? The general *concourſe* of the people of every age, ſex, rank, and condition of life, willingly or unwillingly gathered together, not only from the neighbouring, but from diſtant parts: *criminals*, ſpeedily to be brought forth, and having no way to eſcape: *officers* waiting in their various poſts, to execute the orders which ſhall be given: and the *Repreſentative* of our gracious Sovereign, whom we ſo highly reverence and honour. The *occaſion* likewiſe of this aſſembly, adds not a little to the ſolemnity of it: to hear and determine cauſes of every kind, ſome of which are of the moſt important nature: on which depends no leſs than life or death; death that uncovers the face of eternity! It was doubtleſs in order to increaſe the ſerious ſenſe of theſe things, and not in the minds of the vulgar only, that the wiſdom of our forefathers did not diſdain to appoint even ſeveral minute circumſtances of this ſolemnity. For theſe alſo, by means of the eye or ear, may more deeply affect

ſect the heart. And when viewed in this light, trumpets, ſtaves, apparel, are no longer trifling or inſignificant, but ſubſervient in their kind and degree to the moſt valuable ends of ſociety.

2. But as awful as this ſolemnity is, one far more awful is at hand. For yet, a little while, and "we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt." "For as I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God." And in that day, "every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God."

3. Had all men a deep ſenſe of this, how effectually would it ſecure the intereſts of ſociety? For what more forcible motive can be conceived, to the practice of genuine morality? To a ſteady purſuit of ſolid virtue? An uniform walking in juſtice, mercy, and truth? What could ſtrengthen our hands in all that is good, and deter us from all evil, like a ſtrong conviction of this, *the Judge ſtandeth at the door:* and we are ſhortly to *ſtand before him?*

4. It may not therefore be improper, or unſuitable to the deſign of the preſent aſſembly, to conſider,

I. The chief circumſtances which will precede our ſtanding before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt.

II. The judgment itſelf, and,

III. A few of the circumſtances which will follow it.

I. Let us, in the firſt place, conſider the chief circumſtances which will precede our ſtanding before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt.

And 1ſt, "* God will ſhew ſigns in the earth beneath:" particularly he will "ariſe to ſhake terribly the earth. The earth ſhall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and ſhall be removed like a cottage." † "There ſhall be earthquakes," κατὰ τοπους (not in divers only, but) "*in all places:*" not in

* Acts ii. 19. † Luke xxi. 11.

one

one only, or a few, but in every part of the habitable world: even "ſuch as were not, ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty earthquakes and ſo great." In one of theſe * "every iſland ſhall flee away, and the mountains will not be found." Meantime all the waters of the terraqueous globe will feel the violence of thoſe concuſſions: † "the ſea and waves roaring," with ſuch an agitation as had never been known before, ſince the hour that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up," to deſtroy the earth, which then ſtood out of the water and in the water. The air will be all ſtorm and tempeſt, full of dark ‖ vapours and pillars of ſmoke; reſounding with thunder from pole to pole, and torn with ten thouſand lightenings. But the commotion will not ſtop in the region of the air: § "the powers of heaven alſo ſhall be ſhaken. There ſhall be ſigns in the ſun and in the moon and in the ſtars;" thoſe fixt, as well as thoſe that move round them. ** "The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. †† "The ſtars ſhall withdraw their ſhining," yea and "fall from heaven," being thrown out of their orbits. And then ſhall be heard the univerſal *ſhout*, ‖‖ from all the companies of heaven, followed by the *voice of the arch-angel*, proclaiming the approach of the Son of God and man, *and the trumpet of God*, ſounding an alarm to all that ſleep in the duſt of the earth. In conſequence of this all the graves ſhall open, and the bodies of men ariſe. ¶ "The ſea alſo ſhall give up the dead which are therein," and every one ſhall riſe with *his own body*: his own in ſubſtance, although ſo changed in its properties, as we cannot now conceive. ¶¶ "For this corruptible will [then] put on incorruption,

* Rev. xvi. 20. † Luke xxi. 25. § Luke xxi. 25, 26. ** Joel ii. 31. †† Joel iii. 15. ‖‖ 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. ¶ Rev. xx. 13. ¶¶ 1 Cor. xv. 53.

and

and this mortal put on immortality." Yea, *death and hades*, the inviſible world, ſhall "deliver up the dead that are in them." So that all who ever lived and died ſince God created man, ſhall be raiſed incorruptible and immortal.

2. At the ſame time "the ſon of man ſhall ſend forth his angels" over all the earth, * "And they ſhall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And the Lord himſelf ſhall "come with clouds, in his own glory, and the glory of his Father, with ten thouſand of his ſaints, even myriads of angels, and † ſhall ſit upon the throne of his glory. And before him ſhall be gathered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, and ſhall ſet the ſheep (the good) on his right hand, and the goats (the wicked) upon the left." Concerning this general aſſembly it is, that the beloved diſciple ſpeaks thus: ‖ "I ſaw the dead, (all that had been dead) ſmall and great, ſtand before God. And the books were opened (a figurative expreſſion, plainly referring to the manner of proceeding among men) and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their works."

II. Theſe are the chief circumſtances which are recorded in the oracles of God, as preceding the general judgment. We are, ſecondly, to conſider the judgment itſelf, ſo far as it hath pleaſed God to reveal it.

1. The perſon by whom God will judge the world is his only begotten Son, whoſe "goings forth are from everlaſting, who is God over all, bleſſed for ever." Unto him, being § "the out-beaming of his Father's glory, the expreſs image of his perſon," the Father ¶ "hath committed all judgment, becauſe he is the ſon of man:" becauſe, though he was ¶¶ "in the form of God, and

* Matt. xxiv. 31. † Matt. xxv. 31, &c. ‖ Rev. xx. 12.
§ Heb. i. 2. ¶ John v. 22, 27. ¶¶ Phil. ii. 6, 7.

thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he emptied himſelf, taking upon him the form of a ſervant, being made in the likeneſs of men." Yea, becauſe "being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, (yet farther) becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him," even in his human nature, and "ordained him," as man, to try the children of men, to be the "judge both of the quick and dead;" both of thoſe who ſhall be found alive at his coming, and of thoſe who were before gathered to their fathers.

2. The time, termed by the Prophet, "the great and the terrible day," is uſually in Scripture ſtiled *The day of the Lord*. The ſpace from the creation of men upon the earth to the end of all things, is *the day of the ſons of men:* the time that is now paſſing over us, is properly *our day*. When this is ended, *the day of the Lord* will begin. But who can ſay, how long it will continue? * "With the Lord one day is as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day." And from this very expreſſion ſome of the ancient Fathers drew that inference, that, what is commonly called, *the Day of Judgment*, would be indeed a thouſand years. And it ſeems they did not go beyond the truth: nay probably they did not come up to it. For if we conſider the number of perſons who are to be judged, and of actions which are to be enquired into, it does not appear, that a thouſand years will ſuffice for the tranſactions of that day. So that it may not improbably comprize ſeveral thouſand years. But God ſhall reveal this alſo in its ſeaſon.

3. With regard to the place where mankind will be judged, we have no explicit account in Scripture. An eminent writer (but not he alone; many have been of the ſame opinion) ſuppoſes it will be on earth, where the works were done, according to

* 2 Pet. iii. 8.

which

which they ſhall be judged, and that God will in order thereto employ the Angels of his ſtrength

"To ſmooth and lengthen out the boundleſs ſpace,
"And ſpread an area for all human race."

But perhaps it is more agreeable to our Lord's own account, of his coming in the clouds, to ſuppoſe it will be above the earth, if not "twice a planetary height." And this ſuppoſition is not a little favoured, by what St. Paul writes to the Theſſalonians. * "The dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. Then we who remain alive, ſhall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." So that it ſeems moſt probable, the great white Throne, will be high exalted above the earth.

4. The perſons to be judged, who can count, any more than the drops of rain, or the ſands of the ſea? "I beheld, (ſaith St. John,) a great multitude, which no man can number, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." How immenſe then muſt be the total multitude, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues? Of all that have ſprung from the loins of Adam, ſince the world began, till time ſhall be no more? If we admit the common ſuppoſition, which ſeems no ways abſurd, that the earth bears at any one time, no leſs than eight hundred millions, of living ſouls, men, women and children: what a congregation muſt all thoſe generations make, who have ſucceeded each other for ſeven thouſand years?

"Great Xerxes world in arms, proud Cannœ's hoſt,
"They all are here: and here they all are loſt.
"Their numbers ſwell to be diſcern'd in vain;
"Loſt as a drop in the unbounded main."

Every man, every woman, every infant of days that ever breathed the vital air, will then hear the voice of the Son of God, and ſtart into life, and pear before him. And this ſeems to be the natu-

* 1 Theſs. iv. 16, 17.

ral import of that expreſſion, *the dead, ſmall and great:* all univerſally, all without exception, all of every age, ſex, or degree; all that ever lived and died, or underwent ſuch a change as will be equivalent with death. For long before that day, the phantom of human greatneſs diſappears, and ſinks into nothing! Even in the moment of death, that vaniſhes away. Who is rich or great in the grave?

5. And every man ſhall there *give an account of his own works*; yea, a full and true account, of all that he ever did while in the body, whether it was good or evil. O what a ſcene will then be diſcloſed, in the ſight of angels and men! While not the fabled *Rhadamanthus*, but the Lord God Almighty, who knoweth all things in heaven and earth,

> "Caſtigatque auditque dolos: ſubigitque fateri
> "Quæ quis apud ſuperos, furto lætatus inani;
> "Diſtulit in ſeram commiſſa piacula mortem."

Nor will all the actions alone of every child of man, be then brought to open view, but all their words: ſeeing * "every idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment." So that "*by thy words*," as well as works, "thou ſhalt be juſtified; or by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned." Will not God then bring to light every circumſtance alſo, that accompanied every word or action, and if not altered the nature, yet leſſened or increaſed the goodneſs or badneſs of them? And how eaſy is this to him, who is "about our bed, and about our path, and ſpieth out all our ways?" We know, "the darkneſs is no darkneſs to Him, but the night ſhineth as the day."

6. Yea, he will bring to light not the hidden works of darkneſs only, but the very thoughts and intents of the heart. And what marvel? For he "ſearcheth the reins and underſtandeth all our thoughts. All things are naked and open to the eyes

* Matt. xii. 36, 37.

of

of Him with whom we have to do. Hell and deſtruction are before him without a covering: How much more the hearts of the children of men?"

7. And in that day ſhall be diſcovered every inward working of every human ſoul: every appetite, paſſion, inclination, affection, with the various combinations of them, with every temper and diſpoſition that conſtitute the whole complex character of each individual. So ſhall it be clearly and infallibly ſeen, who was righteous, and who unrighteous; and in what degree every action, or perſon, or character, was either good or evil.

8. "Then the king will ſay to them upon his right-hand, come ye bleſſed of my father. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat, thirſty and ye gave me drink, I was a ſtranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me. In like manner, all the good they did upon earth, will be recited before men and angels: whatſoever they had done either in word or deed, in the name, or for the ſake, of the Lord Jeſus. All their good deſires, intentions, thoughts, all their holy diſpoſitions, will alſo be then remembered; and it well appear, that though they were unknown or forgotten among men, yet God noted them in his book. All their ſufferings likewiſe for the name of Jeſus, and for the teſtimony of a good conſcience, will be diſplayed, unto their praiſe from the righteous judge, their honour before ſaints and angels, and the increaſe of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

9. But will their evil deeds too, (ſince if we take in his whole life, there is not a man on earth that liveth and ſinneth not,) will theſe be remembered in that day, and mentioned in the great congregation? Many believe they will not, and aſk, "Would not this imply, that their ſufferings were not at an end, even when life ended? Seeing they would ſtill have ſorrow, and ſhame, and confuſion of face to endure?" They aſk farther, How can this be reconciled with God's declaration by the prophet,

* "If the wicked will turn from all his ſins that he hath committed, and keep all my ſtatutes, and do that which is lawful and right; all his tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, they ſhall not be once mentioned unto him." How is it conſiſtent with the promiſe which God has made, to all who accept of the goſpel-covenant, † "I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their ſin no more?" Or as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, § "I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more?"

10. It may be anſwered, it is apparently and abſolutely neceſſary, for the full diſplay of the glory of God, for the clear and perfect manifeſtation of his wiſdom, juſtice, power, and mercy, toward the heirs of ſalvation, that all the circumſtances of their life ſhould be placed in open view, together with all their tempers, and all the deſires, thoughts, and intents of their hearts. Otherwiſe how would it appear out of what a depth of ſin and miſery the grace of God had delivered them? And, indeed, if the whole lives of all the children of men were not manifeſtly diſcovered, the whole amazing contexture of divine providence could not be manifeſted: nor ſhould we yet be able in a thouſand inſtances, "To juſtify the ways of God to man." Unleſs our Lord's words were fulfilled in their utmoſt ſenſe, without any reſtriction or limitation, ¶ "There is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, or hid that ſhall not be known," abundance of God's diſpenſations under the ſun would ſtill appear without their reaſons. And then only when God hath brought to light all the hidden things of darkneſs, whoſoever were the actors therein, will it be ſeen that wiſe and good were all his ways: that he ſaw through the thick cloud, and governed all things by the wiſe counſel of his own will: that nothing was left to the chance or the caprice of

* Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. † Jer. xxxi. 34.
§ Heb. viii. 12. ¶ Matt. x. 26.

men,

men, but God diſpoſed all ſtrongly and ſweetly, and wrought all into one connected chain of juſtice, mercy and truth.

11. And in the diſcovery of the divine perfections, the righteous will rejoice with joy unſpeakable; far from feeling any painful ſorrow or ſhame, for any of thoſe paſt tranſgreſſions, which were long ſince blotted out as a cloud, waſhed away by the blood of the Lamb. It will be abundantly ſufficient for them, that "all the tranſgreſſions which they had committed, ſhall not be once mentioned unto them, (to their diſadvantage; that) their ſins and tranſgreſſions and iniquities ſhall be remembered no more," to their condemnation. This is the plain meaning of the promiſe: and this all the children of God ſhall find true, to their everlaſting comfort.

12. After the righteous are judged, the king will turn to them upon his left hand, and they ſhall alſo be judged, every man according to his works. But not only their outward works will be brought into the account, but all the evil words which they have ever ſpoken; yea, all the evil deſires, affections, tempers, which have had a place in their ſouls; and all the evil thoughts or deſigns which were ever cheriſhed in their hearts. The joyful ſentence of acquital will then be pronounced upon thoſe upon the right hand: the dreadful ſentence of condemnation upon thoſe on the left: both of which muſt remain fixt and unmoveable, as the throne of GOD.

III. 1. We may, in the third place, conſider a few of the circumſtances which will follow the general judgment. And the firſt is the execution of the ſentence pronounced on the evil and on the good. "Theſe ſhall go away into eternal puniſhment, and the righteous into life eternal." It ſhould be obſerved, it is the very ſame word which is uſed, both in the former and the latter clauſe: it follows, that either the puniſhment laſts for ever, or the reward too will come to an end. No, never, unleſs

unleſs God could come to an end, or his mercy and truth could fail. "Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father, and ſhall drink of thoſe rivers of pleaſure which are at God's right hand for evermore. But here all deſcription falls ſhort; all human language fails! Only one who is caught up into the third heaven, can have a juſt conception of it. But even ſuch an one cannot expreſs what he hath ſeen: theſe things it is not poſſible for man to utter.

The wicked, meantime, ſhall be turned into hell, even all the people that forgot God. They will be "puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." They will be "caſt into the lake of fire burning with brimſtone," originally "prepared for the devil and his angels;" where they will gnaw their tongues for anguiſh and pain, they will curſe God and look upward: there the dogs of hell, pride, malice, revenge, rage, horror, deſpair, continually devour them. "There they have no reſt, day or night, but the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth for ever and ever. For their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."

2. Then the heavens will be ſhriveled up as a parchment ſcroll, and paſs away with a great noiſe: they will * "flee from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and there will be found no place for them." The very manner of their paſſing away is diſcloſed to us by the Apoſtle Peter: † "In the day of God, the heavens being on fire, ſhall be diſſolved." The whole beautiful fabric will be overthrown by that raging element, the connection of all its parts deſtroyed, and every atom torn aſunder from the others. § "The earth alſo, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up." The enormous works of nature, the everlaſting hills, mountains that have defied the rage of time, and ſtood unmoved ſo many thouſand years, will ſink down in

* Rev. xx. 12. † 2 Pet. iii. 12. § Ibid ver. 10.

fiery

fiery ruin. How much leſs will the works of art, though of the moſt durable kind, the utmoſt efforts of human induſtry, tombs, pillars, triumphal arches, caſtles, pyramids, be able to withſtand the flaming conqueror. All, all will periſh, vaniſh away, like a dream when one awaketh!

3. It has indeed been imagined by ſome great and good men, that as it requires the ſame Almighty power, to annihilate things as to create, to ſpeak into nothing or out of nothing: ſo no part of, no atom in the univerſe, will be totally or finally deſtroyed. Rather, they ſuppoſe, that as the laſt operation of fire, which we have yet been able to obſerve, is to reduce into glaſs, what by a ſmaller force it had reduced to aſhes: ſo in the day God hath ordained, the whole earth, if not the material heavens alſo, will undergo this change, after which the fire can have no farther power over them. And they believe this is intimated by that expreſſion in the Revelation made to St. John, * "Before the throne there was a ſea of glaſs, like unto chryſtal." We cannot now either affirm or deny this: but we ſhall know hereafter.

4. If it be enquired by the ſcoffers, the minute philoſophers, How can theſe things be? Whence ſhould come ſuch an immenſe quantity of fire as would conſume the heavens and the whole terraqueous globe? We would beg leave, firſt, to remind them, that this difficulty is not peculiar to the Chriſtian ſyſtem. The ſame opinion almoſt univerſally obtained among the *unbigotted* heathens. So one of thoſe celebrated *free-thinkers* ſpeaks according to generally received ſentiment;

"Eſſe quoque in fatis reminiſcitur, affore tempus,
"Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia cœli
"Ardeat, & mundi moles operoſa laboret."

But, ſecondly, it is eaſy to anſwer, even from our ſlight and ſuperficial acquaintance with natural things, that there are abundant magazines of fire ready prepared, and treaſured up againſt the day of

* Rev. iv. 6.

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the Lord. How ſoon may a comet, commiſſioned by him, travel down from the moſt diſtant parts of the univerſe? And were it to fix upon the earth, in its return from the ſun, when it is ſome thouſand times hotter than a red-hot cannon-ball, who does not ſee what muſt be the immediate conſequence? But, not to aſcend ſo high as the ethereal heavens, might not the ſame lightnings which *give ſhine to the world*, if commanded by the Lord of nature, give ruin and utter deſtruction? Or, to go no farther than the globe itſelf: who knows what huge reſervoirs of liquid fire are from age to age contained in the bowels of the earth? Ætna, Hecla, Veſuvius, and all the other Volcanoes that belch out flames and coals of fire, what are they, but ſo many proofs and mouths of thoſe fiery furnaces? And at the ſame time ſo many evidences, that God hath in readineſs wherewith to fulfil his word. Yea, were we to obſerve no more than the ſurface of the earth, and the things that ſurround us on every ſide, it is moſt certain, (as a thouſand experiments prove, beyond all poſſibility of denial,) that we ourſelves, our whole bodies are full of fire, as well as every thing round about us. Is it not eaſy, to make this ethereal fire viſible to the naked eye? And to produce thereby the very ſame effects on combuſtible matter, which are produced by culinary fire? Needs there then any more, than for God to unlooſe that ſecret chain, whereby this irreſiſtible agent is now bound down, and lies quieſcent in every particle of matter? And how ſoon would it tear the univerſal frame in pieces, and involve all in one common ruin?

5. There is one circumſtance more which will follow the judgment, that deſerves our ſerious conſideration. * "We look, (ſays the Apoſtle,) according to his promiſe, for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs." The promiſe ſtands in the prophecy of Iſaiah, † "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. And

* 2 Pet. iii. 13. † Iſaiah lv. 17.

the

the former ſhall not be remembered:" ſo great ſhall the glory of the latter be. Theſe St. John did behold in the viſions of God. * "I ſaw (ſaith he) a new heaven and a new earth, for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away." And only righteouſneſs dwelt therein: Accordingly he adds, † "And I heard a great voice from [the third] heaven, ſaying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, and be their God!" Of neceſſity therefore they will all be happy: § "God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying; neither ſhall there be any more pain. ‖ There ſhall be no more curſe; but they ſhall ſee his face;" ſhall have the neareſt acceſs to, and thence the higheſt reſemblance of him. This is the ſtrongeſt expreſſion in the language of Scripture, to denote the moſt perfect happineſs. "And his name ſhall be on their foreheads;" they ſhall be openly acknowledged as God's own property; and his glorious nature ſhall moſt viſibly ſhine forth in them. "And there ſhall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the ſun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they ſhall reign for ever and ever."

IV. It remains only, to apply the preceding conſiderations to all who are here before God. And are we not directly led ſo to do, by the preſent ſolemnity, which ſo naturally points us to that day, when the Lord will judge the world in righteouſneſs? This therefore, by reminding us of that more awful ſeaſon, may furniſh many leſſons of inſtruction. A few of theſe I may be permitted juſt to touch on. May God write them on all our hearts!

* Rev. xx. 1. † Ibid. ver. 3. § Rev. xx. 4.
‖ Ibid. xxii. 3, 4.

1. And,

1 And, firſt, how beautiful are the feet of thoſe who are ſent by the wiſe and gracious providence of God, to execute juſtice on earth, to defend the injured, and puniſh the wrong-doer! Are they not the Miniſters of God to us for good, the grand ſupporters of the public tranquility, the patrons of innocence and virtue, the great ſecurity of all our temporal bleſſings? And does not every one of theſe repreſent not only an earthly prince, but the Judge of the earth? Him whoſe "Name is written upon his thigh, KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS!" O that all theſe ſons of the right hand of the Moſt High, may be holy as he is holy! Wiſe with the wiſdom that ſitteth by his throne, like him who is the eternal Wiſdom of the Father! No reſpecters of perſons, as he is none; but rendering to every man according to his works: like him inflexibly, inexorably juſt, though pitiful and of tender mercy! So ſhall they be terrible indeed to them that do evil, as not bearing the ſword in vain. So ſhall the laws of our land have their full uſe and due honour, and the throne of our King be ſtill eſtabliſhed in righteouſneſs.

2. Ye truly honourable men, whom God and the king have commiſſioned, in a lower degree to adminiſter juſtice: may not ye be compared to thoſe miniſtering ſpirits who will attend the judge coming in the clouds? May you, like them, burn with love to God and man! May you love righteouſneſs and hate iniquity! May ye all miniſter in your ſeveral ſpheres (ſuch honour hath God given you alſo!) to them that ſhall be heirs of ſalvation, and to the glory of your great Sovereign! May ye remain the eſtabliſhers of peace, the bleſſing and ornaments of your country, the protectors of a guilty land, the Guardian Angels of all that are round about you!

3. You, whoſe office it is to execute what is given you in charge by him before whom you ſtand; how nearly are you concerned to reſemble

thoſe,

thoſe, that ſtand before the face of the ſon of man? Thoſe ſervants of his that do his pleaſure, and hearken to the voice of his words. Does it not highly import *you*, to be as uncorrupt as *them?* To approve yourſelves the ſervants of God? To do juſtly and love mercy; to do to all as ye would they ſhould do to you? So ſhall that great Judge, under whoſe eye you continually ſtand, ſay to you alſo, "Well done, good and faithful ſervants: enter ye into the joy of your Lord!"

4. Suffer me to add a few words to all of you who are this day preſent before the Lord. Should not you bear it in your minds all the day long, that a more awful day is coming? A large aſſembly this! But what is it to that which every eye will then behold, the general aſſembly of all the children of men that ever lived on the face of the whole earth! A few will ſtand at the judgment ſeat this day, to be judged touching what ſhall be laid to their charge. And they are now reſerved in priſon, perhaps in chains, till they are brought forth to be tried and ſentenced. But we ſhall all, I that ſpeak, and you that hear, "Stand at the judgment ſeat of Chriſt!" And we are now reſerved on this earth, which is not our home, in this priſon of fleſh and blood, perhaps many of us in chains of darkneſs too, till we are ordered to be brought forth. Here a man is queſtioned concerning one or two facts, which he is ſuppoſed to have committed. There we are to give an account of all our works, from the cradle to the grave; of all our words, of all our deſires and tempers, all the thoughts and intents of our hearts; of all the uſe we have made in our various talents, whether of mind, body or fortune, till God ſaid, "Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip: for thou mayeſt be no longer ſteward." In this court, it is poſſible ſome who are guilty, may eſcape for want of evidence. But there is no want of evidence in that court. All men with whom you had the moſt ſecret intercourſe, who were privy

to all your deſigns and actions, are ready before your face. So are all the ſpirits of darkneſs, who inſpired evil deſigns, and aſſiſted in the execution of them. So are all the angels of God, thoſe eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro over all the earth, who watched over your ſouls, and laboured for your good, ſo far as you would permit. So is your own conſcience, a thouſand witneſſes in one, now no more capable of being either blinded or ſilenced, but conſtrained to know and to ſpeak the naked truth, touching all your thoughts, and words, and actions. And is conſcience as a thouſand witneſſes? yea, but God is as a thouſand conſciences! O who can ſtand before the face of the great God, even our Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt!

See, ſee! He cometh! He maketh the clouds his chariots! He rideth upon the wings of the wind! A devouring fire goeth before him, and after him, a flame burneth! See, he ſitteth upon his throne, clothed with light as with a garment, arrayed with majeſty and honour! Behold his eyes are as a flame of fire, his voice as the ſound of many waters!

How will ye eſcape? Will ye call to the mountains to fall on you, the rocks to cover you? Alas, the mountains themſelves, the rocks, the earth, the heavens, are juſt ready to flee away! Can ye prevent the ſentence? Wherewith? With all the ſubſtance of thy houſe, with thouſands of gold and ſilver? Blind wretch! Thou cameſt naked from thy mother's womb, and more naked into eternity. Hear the Lord, the Judge! "Come ye bleſſed of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Joyful ſound! How widely different from that voice, which echoes through the expanſe of heaven, "Depart, ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" And who is he, that can prevent or retard the full execution of either ſentence? Vain hope! Lo, Hell is moved from beneath, to receive thoſe who are ripe for deſtruction! And the everlaſting

laſting doors lift up their heads, that the heirs of glory may come in.

5. "What manner of perſons then ought we to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs?" We know it cannot be long, before the Lord will deſcend with the voice of the Archangel, and the trumpet of God; when every one of us ſhall appear before him, and give account of his own works. "Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing ye look for theſe things, [ſeeing ye know, He will come and will not tarry,] be diligent that ye may be found of him, in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs." Why ſhould ye not? Why ſhould one of you be found, on the left hand, at his appearing? He willeth not that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance; by repentance, to faith, in a bleeding Lord; by faith, to ſpotleſs love, to the full image of God, renewed in the heart, and producing all holineſs of converſation. Can you doubt of this, when you remember, the Judge of all, is likewiſe the Saviour of all? Hath he not bought you with his own blood, that ye might not periſh, but have everlaſting life? O make proof of his mercy, rather than his juſtice! Of his love, rather than the thunder of his power! He is not far from every one of us: and he is now come, not to condemn, but to ſave the world. He ſtandeth in the midſt! Sinner, doth he not now, even now, knock at the door of thy heart? O that thou mayeſt know, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! O that ye may now give yourſelves to him who gave himſelf for you, in humble faith, in holy, active, patient love! ſo ſhall ye rejoice with exceeding joy in his day, when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

SERMON XVI.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

MALACHI III. 7.

" Ye are gone away from mine Ordinances and " have not kept them."

1. BUT are there any *ordinances* now, ſince life and immortality were brought to light by the goſpel? Are there under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, any *means* ordained of God, as the uſual channels of his grace? This queſtion could never have been propoſed, in the Apoſtolical Church, unleſs by one who openly avowed himſelf to be an Heathen; the whole body of Chriſtians being agreed, that Chriſt hath ordained certain outward means, for conveying his grace into the ſouls of men. Their conſtant practice ſet this beyond all diſpute; for ſo long as " all that believe were together, and had all things common," (Acts ii. 44.) " they continued ſtedfaſtly in the teaching of the Apoſtles, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers," ver. 42.

2. But in proceſs of time, when *the love of many waxed cold*, ſome began to miſtake the *means* for the *end*, and to place Religion, rather in doing thoſe outward works, than in a heart renewed after the image of God. They forgot, that " the end of every commandment is love, out of a pure heart, with faith unfeigned:" the loving the Lord their God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themſelves; and the being purified from pride, anger, and evil deſire, by a *faith of the operation of God*. Others ſeemed to imagine, that though Religion did

did not principally consist in these outward means, yet there was something in them wherewith God was well pleased, something that would still make them acceptable in his sight, though they were not exact in the weightier matters of the law, in Justice, Mercy, and the Love of God.

3. It is evident, in those who abused them thus, they did not conduce to the end for which they were ordained. Rather, the things which should have been for their health, were to them an occasion of falling. They were so far from receiving any blessing therein, that they only drew down a curse upon their head: so far from growing more heavenly in heart and life, that they were twofold more the children of hell than before. Others clearly perceiving, that these means did not convey the grace of God to those children of the devil, began from this particular case to draw a general conclusion, "That they were not means of conveying the grace of God."

4. Yet the number of those who *abused* the ordinances of God, was far greater than of those who *despised* them, till certain men arose, not only of great understanding, (sometimes joined with considerable learning) but who likewise appeared to be men of love, experimentally acquainted with true, inward Religion. Some of these were burning and shining lights, persons famous in their generations, and such as had well deserved of the Church of Christ, for standing in the gap against the overflowings of ungodliness.

It cannot be supposed, that these holy and venerable men, intended any more at first, than to shew that outward Religion is nothing worth, without the Religion of the heart: that God "is a Spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." That therefore external worship is lost labour, without a heart devoted to God: that the outward ordinances of God then profit much, when they advance inward holiness,

but when they advance it not, are unprofitable and void, are lighter than vanity: yea, that when they are uſed, as it were, *in the place* of this, they are an utter abomination to the Lord.

5. Yet it is not ſtrange, if ſome of theſe, being ſtrongly convinced, of that horrid profanation of the ordinances of God, which had ſpread itſelf over the whole Church, and well nigh driven true Religion out of the world; in their fervent zeal for the glory of God, and the recovery of ſouls; from that fatal deluſion, ſpake as if outward Religion were *abſolutely nothing*, as if it had *no* place in the Religion of Chriſt. It is not ſurpriſing at all, if they ſhould not always have expreſſed themſelves with ſufficient caution. So that unwary hearers might believe, they condemned all outward means, as altogether unprofitable; and as not deſigned of God to be the ordinary channels of conveying his grace into the ſouls of men.

Nay, it is not impoſſible, ſome of theſe holy men did at length themſelves fall into this opinion: in particular, thoſe who, not by choice, but by the Providence of God, were cut off from all theſe ordinances: perhaps wandering up and down, having no certain abiding-place, or dwelling in dens and caves of the earth. Theſe experiencing the grace of God in themſelves, though they were deprived of all outward means, might infer, that the ſame grace would be given to them, who of ſet purpoſe abſtained from them.

6. And Experience ſhews, how eaſily this notion ſpreads, and inſinuates itſelf into the minds of men: eſpecially of thoſe who are thoroughly awakened out of the ſleep of death, and begin to feel the weight of their ſins, a burthen too heavy to be borne. Theſe are uſually impatient of their preſent ſtate, and trying every way to eſcape from it. They are always ready to catch at any new propoſal of eaſe or happineſs. They have probably tried moſt outward means, and found no eaſe

in

in them: it may be, more and more of remorſe and fear, and ſorrow and condemnation. It is eaſy therefore to perſuade theſe, that it is better for them to abſtain from all thoſe means. They are already weary of ſtriving (as it ſeems) in vain, of labouring in the fire: and are therefore glad of any pretence to caſt aſide that wherein their ſoul has no pleaſure; to give over the painful ſtrife, and ſink down into an indolent inactivity.

II. 1. In the following Diſcourſe, I propoſe to examine at large, Whether there are any means of grace?

By *means of grace* I underſtand, outward ſigns, words or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the *ordinary* channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, juſtifying, or ſanctifying grace.

I uſe this expreſſion, "Means of grace," becauſe I know none better, and becauſe it has been generally uſed in the Chriſtian Church for many ages: in particular, by our own Church, which directs us to bleſs God, both for the "*Means of grace* and hope of glory; and teaches us that a Sacrament is "An outward ſign of inward *grace*, and a *means* whereby we receive the ſame."

The chief of theſe means are prayer, whether in ſecret or with the great congregation; ſearching the ſcriptures (which implies reading, hearing and meditating thereon) and receiving the Lord's Supper, eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of Him: and theſe we believe to be ordained of God, as the ordinary channels of conveying his grace to the ſouls of men.

2. But we allow, That the whole value of the means, depends on their actual ſubſervience to the end of Religion; that conſequently all theſe means when ſeparate from the end, are leſs than nothing and vanity; that if they do not actually conduce to the knowledge and love of God, they are not acceptable

ceptable in his ſight: yea, rather, they are an abomination before him; a ſtink in his noſtrils; he is weary to bear them. Above all, if they are uſed as a kind of *Commutation* for the Religion they were deſigned to ſubſerve; it is not eaſy to find words for the enormous folly and wickedneſs, of thus turning God's arms againſt himſelf; of keeping Chriſtianity out of the heart by thoſe very means, which were ordained for the bringing it in.

3. We allow likewiſe, that all outward means whatever, if ſeparate from the Spirit of God, cannot profit at all, cannot conduce in any degree either to the knowledge or love of God. Without controverſy, the help that is done upon earth, He doth it himſelf. It is He alone who by his own almighty power, worketh in us what is pleaſing in his ſight. And all outward things, unleſs he work in them and by them, are mere weak and beggarly elements. Whoſoever therefore imagines, there is any intrinſic power, in any means whatſoever, does greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God. We know that there is no inherent power, in the words that are ſpoken in prayer; in the letter of Scripture read, the ſound thereof heard, or the bread and wine received in the Lord's Supper: but that it is God alone who is the Giver of every good gift, the Author of all grace; that the whole power is of him, whereby thro' any of theſe, there is any bleſſing conveyed to our ſouls. We know likewiſe, that he is able to give the ſame grace though there were no means on the face of the earth. In this ſenſe we may affirm, that "with regard to God, there is no ſuch thing as means: ſeeing he is equally able to work whatſoever pleaſeth him, by any, or by none at all.

4. We allow farther, That the uſe of all means whatever, will not atone for one ſin; that it is the blood of Chriſt alone, whereby any ſinner can be reconciled to God; there being no other propitiation for our ſins, no other fountain for ſin and uncleanneſs.

cleanneſs. Every believer in Chriſt is deeply convinced, that there is no *merit*, but in Him: that there is no *merit* in any of his own works; not in uttering the prayer, or ſearching the Scripture, or hearing the Word of God, or eating of that bread and drinking of that cup. So that if no more be intended by the expreſſion ſome have uſed, "Chriſt is the only means of grace," than this, That he is the only *meritorious cauſe* of it, it cannot be gainſaid by any who know the grace of God.

5. Yet once more. We allow (though it is a melancholy truth) that a large proportion of thoſe who are called Chriſtians, do to this day abuſe the means of grace, to the deſtruction of their ſouls. This is doubtleſs the caſe with all thoſe who reſt content, in the form of godlineſs without the power. Either they fondly preſume, they are Chriſtians already, becauſe they do thus and thus; although Chriſt was never yet revealed in their hearts, nor the love of God ſhed abroad therein: or elſe they ſuppoſe, They ſhall infallibly be ſo, barely becauſe they uſe theſe means: idly dreaming (though perhaps hardly conſcious thereof) either that there is ſome kind of *power* therein, whereby ſooner or later (they know not when) they ſhall certainly be made holy: or that there is a ſort of *merit* in uſing them, which will ſurely move God to give them holineſs, or accept them without it.

6. So little do they underſtand that great foundation of the whole Chriſtian building, *By grace ye are ſaved*. Ye are ſaved from your ſins, from the guilt and power thereof, ye are reſtored to the favour and image of God, not for any works, *merits*, or deſervings of yours, but by the free *grace*, the mere mercy of God, through the *merits* of his well-beloved Son. Ye are thus ſaved, not by any *power*, wiſdom, or ſtrength, which is in you, or in any other creature: but merely through the grace

or *power* of the Holy Ghoſt, which worketh all in all.

7. But the main queſtion remains. We know this ſalvation is the gift and the work of God. But how (may one ſay, who is convinced he hath it not) may I attain thereto? If you ſay, "Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved:" he anſwers, True; but how ſhall I believe? You reply, Wait upon God.—Well. But how am I to wait? In the means of grace, or out of them? Am I to wait for the grace of God which bringeth ſalvation, by uſing theſe means, or by laying them aſide?

8. It cannot poſſibly be conceived, that the Word of God ſhould give no direction in ſo important a point: or that the Son of God, who came down from heaven for us men and for our ſalvation, ſhould have left us undetermined with regard to a queſtion, wherein our ſalvation is ſo nearly concerned.

And in fact, he hath not left us undetermined; he hath ſhewn us the way wherein we ſhould go. We have only to conſult the Oracles of God, to enquire what is written there? And if we ſimply abide by their deciſion, there can no poſſible doubt remain.

III. 1. According to this, according to the deciſion of holy writ, all who deſire the grace of God, are to wait for it, in the means which he hath ordained; in uſing, not laying them aſide.

And firſt: all who deſire the grace of God, are to wait for it in the way of *prayer*. This is the expreſs direction of our Lord himſelf. In his ſermon on the mount, after explaining at large wherein Religion conſiſts, and deſcribing the main branches of it, he adds, Aſk and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that aſketh receiveth, and he that ſeeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened," Matt. vii. 7, 8.

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Here we are in the plaineſt manner directed to aſk, in order to, or as a *means* of receiving; to ſeek in order to find, the grace of God, the pearl of great price; and to knock, to continue aſking and ſeeking, if we would enter into his kingdom.

2. That no doubt might remain, our Lord labours this point in a more peculiar manner. He appeals to every man's own heart. "What man is there of you, who if his ſon aſk bread, will give him a ſtone? Or if he aſk a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven," the Father of angels and men, the Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh, "give good things to them that aſk him?" ver. 9, 10, 11. Or, as he expreſſes himſelf on another occaſion, including all good things in one, "How much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?" Luke xi. 13. It ſhould be particularly obſerved here, that the perſons directed to aſk, had not then received the holy Spirit. Nevertheleſs our Lord directs them to uſe this means, and promiſes that it ſhould be effectual; that upon aſking they ſhould receive the holy Spirit, from him whoſe mercy is over all his works.

3. The abſolute neceſſity of uſing this means, if we would receive any gift from God, yet farther appears from that remarkable paſſage which immediately precedes theſe words: "And he ſaid unto them [whom he had juſt been teaching how to pray] which of you ſhall have a friend, and ſhall go unto him at midnight, and ſhall ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves:—and he from within ſhall anſwer, Trouble me not;—I cannot riſe and give thee: I ſay unto you, though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend, yet becauſe of his importunity he will riſe, and give him as many as he needeth. And I ſay unto you, Aſk and it ſhall be given you," Luke xi. 5, 7, 8, 9.

"Though

"Though he will not give him, becauſe he is his friend, yet becauſe of his importunity he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth." How could our bleſſed Lord more plainly declare, That we may receive of God, by this means, by importunately aſking, what otherwiſe we ſhall not receive at all.

4. "He ſpoke alſo another parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint," till through this means they ſhould receive of God, whatſoever petition they aſked of him. "There was in a city a Judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and ſhe came unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of my adverſary. And he would not for awhile; but afterwards he ſaid within himſelf, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet becauſe this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me," Luke xviii. 1—5. The application of this our Lord himſelf hath made. "Hear what the unjuſt Judge ſaith!" Becauſe ſhe continues to aſk, becauſe ſhe will take no denial, therefore I will avenge her. "And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them ſpeedily,"—if they *pray and faint not*.

5. A direction equally full and expreſs, to wait for the bleſſings of God in private prayer, together with a poſitive promiſe, that by this means we ſhall obtain the requeſt of our lips, he hath given us in thoſe well-known words: "Enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly," Matt. vi. 6.

6. If it be poſſible for any direction to be more clear, it is that which God hath given us by the Apoſtle, with regard to prayer of every kind, public or private, and the bleſſing annext thereto. "If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally, [if they aſk; otherwiſe

wiſe *ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not*, Jam. iv. 2.) and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him," chap. i. 5.

If it be objected, "But this is no direction to unbelievers; to them who know not the pardoning grace of God: for the Apoſtle adds, "But let him aſk in faith: otherwiſe, let him not think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord." I anſwer, The meaning of the word *faith* in this place, is fixed by the Apoſtle himſelf, (as if it were on purpoſe to obviate this objection) in the words immediately following: *Let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering*, nothing *doubting*, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος. Not doubting but God heareth his prayer, and will fulfil the deſire of his heart.

The groſs, blaſphemous abſurdity of ſuppoſing *faith* in this place to be taken in the full Chriſtian meaning, appears hence: it is ſuppoſing the Holy Ghoſt to direct a man who knows he has not this faith (which is here termed *wiſdom*) to aſk it of God, with a poſitive promiſe that *it ſhall be given him*; and then immediately to ſubjoin, That it ſhall not be given him, unleſs he have it before he aſks for it! But who can bear ſuch a ſuppoſition? From this Scripture, therefore, as well as thoſe cited above, we muſt infer, that all who deſire the grace of God, are to wait for it in the way of prayer.

7. Secondly, All who deſire the grace of God, are to wait for it in *ſearching the Scriptures*.

Our Lord's direction with regard to the uſe of this means, is likewiſe plain and clear. *Search the Scriptures*, ſaith he to the unbelieving Jews,—*for they teſtify of me*, John v. 39. And for this very end did he direct them to ſearch the Scriptures, that they might *believe in him*.

The objection, "That this is not a command, but only an aſſertion, that they did ſearch the Scriptures," is ſhameleſsly falſe. I deſire thoſe who urge it, to let us know, how a command can be

more clearly expreſſed, than in thoſe terms, Ερευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς. It is as peremptory as ſo many words can make it.

And what a bleſſing from God attends the uſe of this means, appears from what is recorded concerning the *Bereans*; who after hearing St. Paul, "ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo? Therefore many of them believed;" found the grace of God, in the way which he had ordained, Acts xvii. 12, 13.

It is probable, indeed, that in ſome of thoſe who had *received the word with all readineſs of mind, faith came* (as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks) *by hearing*, and was only confirmed by *reading* the Scriptures. But it was obſerved above, that under the general term of *ſearching the Scriptures*, both hearing, reading, and meditating are contained.

8. And that this is a means whereby God not only gives, but alſo confirms and increaſes true wiſdom, we learn from the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "From a child thou haſt known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus," 2 Tim. iii. 15. The ſame truth (namely, that this is the great means God has ordained for conveying his manifold grace to man) is delivered, in the fulleſt manner that can be conceived, in the words which immediately follow: "All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God; [conſequently, all Scripture is infallibly true;] and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; to the end that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works," ver. 16, 17.

9. It ſhould be obſerved, that this is ſpoken primarily and directly, of the Scriptures which Timothy had *known from a child*; which muſt have been thoſe of the Old Teſtament, for the New was not then wrote. How far then was St. Paul (though he was *not a whit behind the very chief of the*

the Apoſtles, nor therefore, I preſume, behind any man now upon earth) from making light of the Old Teſtament! Behold this, leſt ye one day *wonder and periſh*, ye who make ſo ſmall account of one half of the Oracles of God! Yea, and that half, of which the Holy Ghoſt expreſsly declares, that it is *profitable*, as a means ordained of God, for this very thing, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: to the end the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works."

10. Nor is this profitable only for the men of God, for thoſe who walk already in the light of his countenance; but alſo for thoſe who are yet in darkneſs, ſeeking him whom they know not. Thus St. Peter, *we have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy*: literally, *and we have the prophetic word more ſure*: Καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, confirmed by our being *eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty*, and *hearing the voice which came from the excellent Glory*) *unto which* (prophetic word; ſo he ſtiles the holy Scriptures) *ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts*, 2 Pet. i. 19. Let all, therefore, who deſire that day to dawn upon their hearts, wait for it in *ſearching the Scriptures*.

11. Thirdly, All who deſire an increaſe of the grace of God, are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord's Supper. For this alſo is a direction himſelf hath given. "The ſame night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, and brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat: this is my body, [that is, the ſacred ſign of my body] this do in remembrance of me. Likewiſe, he took the cup, ſaying, This cup is the New Teſtament, [or covenant, in my blood, [the ſacred ſign of that covenant] this do ye—in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's death till he come," 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. Ye openly exhibit

the ſame, by theſe viſible ſigns, before God, and angels, and men. Ye manifeſt your ſolemn remembrance of his death, till he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Only *let a man* firſt *examine himſelf*, whether he underſtands the nature and deſign of this holy inſtitution, and whether he really deſire to be himſelf made conformable to the death of Chriſt: *and ſo*, nothing doubting, "let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, ver. 28.

Here then the direction firſt given by our Lord, is expreſsly repeated by the Apoſtle. Let him eat; let him drink: (ἐσθιέτω πινέτω, both in the imperative mood.) Words not implying a bare permiſſion only, but a clear, explicit command: a command to all thoſe, either who already are filled with peace and joy in believing, or who can truly ſay, "The remembrance of our ſins is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable."

12. And that this is alſo an ordinary, ſtated means of receiving the grace of God, is evident from thoſe words of the Apoſtle, which occur in the preceding chapter. "The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion, [or communication,] of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?" (1 Cor. x. 16.) Is not the eating of that bread, and the drinking of that cup, the outward, viſible means, whereby God conveys into our ſouls all that ſpiritual grace, that righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, which were purchaſed by the body of Chriſt once broken, and the blood of Chriſt once ſhed for us? Let all, therefore, who truly deſire the grace of God, eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

IV. 1. But as plainly as God hath pointed out the way, wherein he will be enquired after, innumerable are the objections which men, wiſe

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in their own eyes, have from time to time raiſed againſt it. It may be needful to conſider a few of theſe; not becauſe they are of weight in themſelves, but becauſe they have ſo often been uſed, eſpecially of late years, to turn the lame out of the way; yea, to trouble and ſubvert thoſe who did run well, while Satan appeared as an angel of light.

The firſt and chief of theſe is, "You cannot uſe theſe means (as you call them) without *truſting* in them." I pray, where is this written? I expect you ſhould ſhew me plain Scripture for your aſſertion. Otherwiſe I dare not receive it: becauſe I am not convinced, that you are wiſer than God.

If it really had been as you aſſert, it is certain Chriſt muſt have known it. And if he had known it, he would ſurely have warned us, he would have revealed it long ago. Therefore becauſe he has not, becauſe there is no tittle of this in the whole revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, I am as fully aſſured your aſſertion is falſe, as that this revelation is of God.

"However, leave them off for a ſhort time, to ſee whether you truſted in them or no." So I am to diſobey God, in order to know, whether I truſt in obeying him! And do you avow this advice? Do you deliberately teach, to *do evil, that good may come?* O tremble at the ſentence of God againſt ſuch Teachers! Their *damnation is juſt.*

"Nay, if you are troubled, when you leave them off, it is plain, you truſted in them." By no means. If I am troubled when I wilfully diſobey God, it is plain his Spirit is ſtill ſtriving with me. But if I am not troubled at wilful ſin, it is plain, I am given up to a reprobate mind.

But what do you mean by "*Truſting* in them?" Looking for the bleſſing of God therein? Believing, that if I wait in this way I ſhall attain, what otherwiſe I ſhould not? So I do. And ſo I will,

God being my helper, even to my life's end. By the grace of God I will *thus* truſt in them, till the day of my death; that is, I will believe, that whatever God hath promiſed, he is faithful alſo to perform. And ſeeing he hath promiſed to bleſs me in this way, I *truſt* it ſhall be according to his word.

2. It has been, ſecondly, objected, "This is ſeeking ſalvation by works." Do you know the meaning of the expreſſion you uſe? What is, "ſeeking ſalvation by works?" In the writings of St. Paul, it means, either ſeeking to be ſaved by obſerving the ritual works of the Moſaic law, or expecting ſalvation for the ſake of our own works, by the merit of our own righteouſneſs. But how is either of theſe implied, in my waiting in the way God has ordained, and expecting that he will meet me there, becauſe he has promiſed ſo to do?

I do expect, that he will fulfil his word, that he will meet and bleſs me in this way. Yet not for the ſake of any works which I have done, nor for the merit of my righteouſneſs: but merely through the merits, and ſufferings, and love of his Son, in whom he is always well-pleaſed.

3. It has been vehemently objected, thirdly, "That Chriſt is the only means of grace." I anſwer, this is mere playing upon words. Explain your term, and the objection vaniſhes away. When we ſay, "Prayer is a means of grace." We underſtand, a channel through which the grace of God is conveyed. When you ſay, "Chriſt is the means of grace," you underſtand, the ſole price and purchaſer of it. Or, that no *man cometh unto the Father but through him.* And who denies it? But this is utterly wide of the queſtion.

4. But does not the Scripture (it has been objected, fourthly) direct us to *wait* for ſalvation? Does not David ſay, "My ſoul waiteth upon God: for of him cometh my ſalvation?" And does not Iſaiah teach us the ſame thing, ſaying, "O Lord,

we

we have waited for thee?" All this cannot be denied. Seeing it is the gift of God, we are undoubtedly to *wait* on him for ſalvation. But how ſhall we wait? If God himſelf has appointed a way, can you find a better way of waiting for him? But, that he hath appointed a way, hath been ſhewn at large, and alſo what that way is. The very words of the Prophet which you cite, put this out of all queſtion. For the whole ſentence runs thus: "In the way of thy judgments [or ordinances,] O Lord have we waited for thee." (Iſaiah xxvi. 8.) And in the very ſame way did David wait, as his own words abundantly teſtify: "I have waited for thy ſaving health, O Lord, and have kept thy law. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy ſtatutes, and I ſhall keep it unto the end.

5. "Yea, ſay ſome, but God has appointed another way, *Stand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of God.*"

Let us examine the Scriptures to which you refer. The firſt of them, with the context, runs thus:

"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Iſrael lift up their eyes—and they were ſore afraid. And they ſaid unto Moſes, Becauſe there were no graves in Egypt, haſt thou taken us away to die in the wilderneſs? And Moſes ſaid unto the people, Fear ye not; ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and ſtretch out thine hand over the ſea and divide it. And the children of Iſrael ſhall go on dry ground through the midſt of the ſea," Exod. xiv. 10, &c.

This was the *ſalvation of God*, which they *ſtood ſtill* to ſee, by *marching forward* with all their might!

The other paſſage wherein this expreſſion occurs, ſtands thus. "There came ſome that told Jehoſhaphat, ſaying, There cometh a great multitude againſt thee, from beyond the ſea. And Jehoſhaphat feared, and ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord, and proclaimed a faſt throughout all Judah. And Judah

dah gathered themſelves together to aſk help of the Lord, even out of all the cities they came to ſeek the Lord. And Jehoſhaphat ſtood in the congregation, in the houſe of the Lord—Then upon Jahaziel came the Spirit of the Lord—And he ſaid—Be not diſmayed by reaſon of this great multitude—To-morrow go ye down againſt them, ye ſhall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourſelves: ſtand ye ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord—And they roſe early in the morning and went forth. And when they began to ſing and to praiſe, the Lord ſet ambuſhments againſt the children of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir—and every one helped to deſtroy another," 2 Chron. xx. 2, &c.

Such was the ſalvation which the children of Judah ſaw. But how does all this prove, that we ought not to wait for the grace of God, in the means which he hath ordained?

6. I ſhall mention but one objection more, which indeed does not properly belong to this head. Nevertheleſs, becauſe it has been ſo frequently urged, I may not wholly paſs it by.

"Does not St. Paul ſay, "If ye be dead with Chriſt, why are ye ſubject to ordinances?" Col. ii. 20. Therefore a Chriſtian, one that is *dead with Chriſt*, need not uſe the ordinances any more."

So you ſay, "If I am a Chriſtian, I am not ſubject to the ordinances of Chriſt!" Surely, by the abſurdity of this, you muſt ſee at the firſt glance, that the ordinances here mentioned cannot be the ordinances of Chriſt! That they muſt needs be the Jewiſh ordinances, to which it is certain, a Chriſtian is no longer ſubject.

And the ſame undeniably appears from the words immediately following, *Touch not, taſte not, handle not*—all evidently referring to the ancient ordinances of the Jewiſh law.

So that this objection is the weakeſt of all. And in ſpite of all, that great truth muſt ſtand unſhaken, That all who deſire the grace of God, are to wait for it, in the means which he hath ordained.

V. 1. But

V. 1. But this being allowed, that all who desire the grace of God, are to wait for it in the means he hath ordained; it may still be enquired, how those means should be used, both as to the *order*, and the *manner* of using them?

With regard to the former, we may observe, there is a kind of order, wherein God himself is generally pleased, to use these means, in bringing a sinner to salvation. A stupid, senseless wretch is going on in his own way, not having God in all his thoughts, when God comes upon him unawares, perhaps by an awakening sermon or conversation, perhaps by some awful providence; or it may be by an immediate stroke of his convincing Spirit, without any outward means at all. Having now a desire to flee from the wrath to come, he purposely goes to *hear*, how it may be done. If he finds a Preacher who speaks to the heart, he is amazed, and begins *searching the scriptures*, whether these things are so? The more he *hears* and *reads*, the more convinced he is; and the more he *meditates* thereon day and night. Perhaps he finds some other book, which explains and enforces what he has heard and read in Scripture. And by all these means, the arrows of conviction sink deeper into his soul. He begins also to *talk* of the things of God, which are ever uppermost in his thoughts; yea, and to talk with God, to *pray* to him, although through fear and shame, he scarce knows what to say. But whether he can speak or no, he cannot but pray, were it only in *groans which cannot be uttered*. Yet being in doubt, whether *the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity* will regard such a sinner as him, he wants to pray with those who know God, with the faithful, in the *great congregation*. But here he observes others go up to the *table of the Lord*. He considers, Christ has said, "Do this!" How is it, that I do not! I am too great a sinner. I am not fit. I am not worthy. After struggling with these scruples awhile, he

breaks

breaks through. And thus he continues in God's way, in hearing, reading, meditating, praying and partaking of the Lord's Supper, till God, in the manner that pleaſes him, ſpeaks to his heart, "Thy faith hath ſaved thee. Go in peace."

2. By obſerving this order of God, we may learn what means to recommend to any particular ſoul. If any of theſe will reach a ſtupid careleſs ſinner, it is probably *hearing* or *converſation*. To ſuch therefore we might recommend theſe, if he has ever any thought about ſalvation. To one who begins to feel the weight of his ſins, not only hearing the Word of God, but *reading* it too, and perhaps other *ſerious books*, may be a means of deeper conviction. May you not adviſe him alſo, to *meditate* on what he reads, that it may have its full force upon his heart? Yea, and to *ſpeak* thereof, and not be aſhamed, particularly among thoſe who walk in the ſame path. When trouble and heavineſs take hold upon him, ſhould you not then earneſtly exhort him, to pour out his ſoul before God! Always to *pray and not to faint?* And when he feels the worthleſſneſs of his own prayers, are you not to work together with God, and remind him of going up into *the houſe of the Lord*, and praying with all them that fear him? But if he does this, the *dying word* of his Lord, will ſoon be brought to his remembrance; a plain intimation, that this is the time, when we ſhould ſecond the motions of the bleſſed Spirit. And thus may we lead him ſtep by ſtep, through all the means which God has ordained; not according to our own will, but juſt as the Providence and the Spirit of God go before and open the way.

3. Yet as we find no command in Holy Writ, for any particular order to be obſerved herein, ſo neither do the Providence and the Spirit of God, adhere to any without variation: but the means into which different men are led, and in which they find the bleſſing of God, are varied, tranſpoſed and

combined

combined together, a thouſand different ways. Yet ſtill our wiſdom is, to follow the leadings of his Providence and his Spirit: to be guided herein (more eſpecially as to the means wherein we ourſelves ſeek the grace of God) partly by his outward Providence, giving us the opportunity of uſing ſometimes one means, ſometimes another: partly by our experience, which it is whereby his free Spirit is pleaſed moſt to work in our heart. And in the mean time, the ſure and general rule for all who groan for the ſalvation of God, is this, Whenever opportunity ſerves, uſe all the means which God has ordained. For who knows, in which God will meet thee, with the grace that bringeth ſalvation?

4. As to the *manner* of uſing them, whereon indeed it wholly depends, whether they ſhould convey any grace at all, to the uſer, it behoves us, Firſt, Always to retain a lively ſenſe, that God is above all means. Have a care therefore of limiting the Almighty. He doth whatſoever and whenſoever it pleaſeth him. He can convey his grace, either in or out of any of the means which he hath appointed. Perhaps he will. *Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his Counſellor?* Look then every moment for his appearing? Be it at the hour you are employed in his ordinances; or before, or after that hour. Or when you are hindered therefrom. He is not hindered. He is always ready: always able, always willing to ſave. *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good!*

Secondly, Before you uſe any means, let it be deeply impreſt on your ſoul, "There is no *power* in this." It is in itſelf a poor, dead, empty thing: ſeparate from God; it is a dry leaf, a ſhadow. Neither is there any *merit* in my uſing this; nothing intrinſically pleaſing to God, nothing whereby I deſerve any favour at his hands, no, not a drop of water to cool my tongue. But becauſe God bids, therefore I do; becauſe he directs me to wait in his

way

way; therefore here I wait for his free mercy, whereof cometh my ſalvation.

Settle this in your heart, that the *Opus operatum*, the mere work done profiteth nothing: that there is no *power* to ſave, but in the Spirit of God; no *merit*, but in the Blood of Chriſt: that conſequently, even what God ordains, conveys no grace to the ſoul, if you truſt not in him alone. On the other hand, he that does truly truſt in him, cannot fall ſhort of the grace of God, even though he were cut off from every outward ordinance, though he were ſhut up in the center of the earth.

Thirdly, In uſing all means, ſeek God alone. In and through every outward thing, look ſingly to the *power* of his Spirit, and the *merits* of his Son. Beware you do not ſtick in the *work* itſelf, if you do, it is all loſt labour. Nothing ſhort of God can ſatisfy your ſoul. Therefore eye him, in all, through all, and above all.

Remember alſo, to uſe all means, as *means*: as ordained not for their own ſake, but in order to the renewal of your ſoul in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. If therefore they actually tend to this, well. But if not, they are dung and droſs. Laſtly, After you have uſed any of theſe, take care how you value yourſelf thereon: how you congratulate yourſelf as having done ſome great thing. This is turning all into poiſon. Think, "If God is not there, what does this avail? Have I not been adding ſin to ſin? How long! O Lord! ſave or I periſh! O lay not this ſin to my charge!" If God was there, if his love flowed into your heart, you have forgot, as it were, the outward work. You ſee, you know, you feel, God is all in all. Be abaſed. Sink down before him. Give him all the praiſe, "Let God in all things be glorified through Chriſt Jeſus. Let all your bones cry out, My ſong ſhall be always of the loving-kindneſs of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be telling of thy truth, from one generation to another!"

END of the FIRST VOLUME.